

D.G.



1934

Photo by Boyle



1959

Photo USDA

# WORKERS IN OUR FIELDS

*Schlesinger Politics of Upheaval pp. 431-433*

*25th Anniversary*

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION



# *Congratulations*

to

## **AMERICA'S FARM WORKERS UNION**

## **UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA**

I. W. ABEL  
Secretary-Treasurer

DAVID J. McDONALD  
President

HOWARD R. HAGUE  
Vice-President



*Remember the more you EARN*

*... the more you BUY*

It is a pleasure to join in the observance of the 25th anniversary of the National Agricultural Workers Union. Over the past 25 years, the continuing advances in American agriculture have contributed to an abundant supply of food and fibre. At the same time new machinery has not eliminated the need for trained farm workers on whose availability much of our harvesting depends. Nor has the new technology removed all of the rural poverty which, in some parts of the nation, afflicts farm workers, sharecroppers, and many small farmers. Men of good will must earnestly seek to correct these inequities in a manner fair to all segments of our society. In this hope I send you my best wishes for a fine anniversary.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER  
President of the United States



## FOREWORD

In the summer of 1934, a group of 18 Negro and white sharecroppers met in an abandoned school on a cotton plantation in eastern Arkansas to form the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. This organization of America's disinherited, now known as the National Agricultural Workers Union AFL-CIO, for a quarter of a century has kept before the public the deplorable conditions of sharecroppers, and the plight of the migrant workers who follow the crops with the sun.

It seems fitting that those of us who are concerned with the problems of the two million families who work on the nation's farms should join together and participate in the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the organization of these people who seek to express their God given right to human dignity.

MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Congratulations and good wishes on the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. The efforts of the agricultural and migrant farm workers to organize and bargain collectively with the corporate owners of farms has been a difficult struggle against the great odds of financial power, hostile legislation, the consequent sometimes adverse rulings of the courts, unfair discrimination, violent intimidation and the importation of foreign workers, which often resulted in under-cutting decent wages and standards of living of the farm workers in the United States. The struggle is still on!

All honor to President Mitchell who has kept the faith in all these years, to the seventeen white and Negro men who gathered in the abandoned rural schoolhouse near Tyronza, Arkansas to found their union, and to the pioneers in the movements in the 1930's to recognize the disinherited farm workers are belonging to our American family with the full rights and hopes of all Americans.

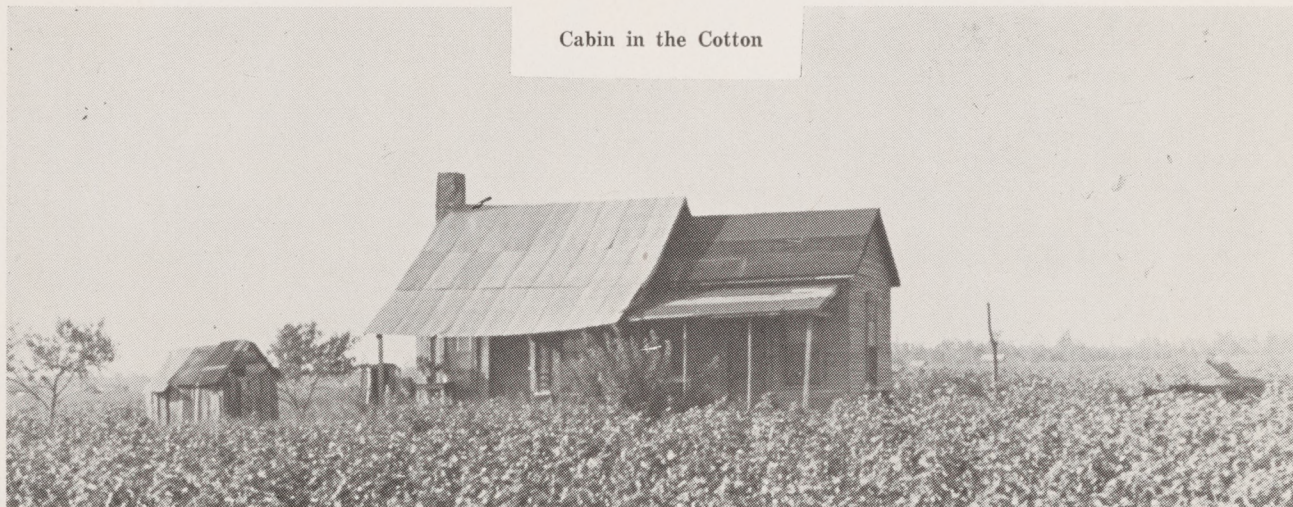
FRANK P. GRAHAM  
Chairman Sponsors Committee

Please convey to the brothers and sisters my deep affection for and devotion to the leadership and membership of the National Agricultural Workers Union, and my hope that the future may see this splendid movement of agricultural workers grow strong and challenging as the conscience of our modern American labor movement. The future belongs to the workers with dedication to the cause of human dignity, freedom, equality, peace and plenty.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH  
Treasurer, Sponsors Committee



Cabin in the Cotton



## *Introduction*

Here is the twenty-five year history of the struggle of workers in the fields to build an organization of their own. The story is a compilation from the pamphlets, diaries, letters, conversations, leaflets and songs written and spoken as the events occurred. The narrator is H. L. Mitchell, one of the founders of this historic movement, who acknowledges the special contribution made by Howard Kester to the written history of the people who struggle for justice and seek to put an end to "the mean things happening in this land." H. L. Mitchell also expresses his deep appreciation to Lewis Carliner for his work in editing and compiling the brief story that follows.

"There are mean things happening in this land  
But the Union's Going on, and the Union's Growing Strong  
There are mean things happening in this land.

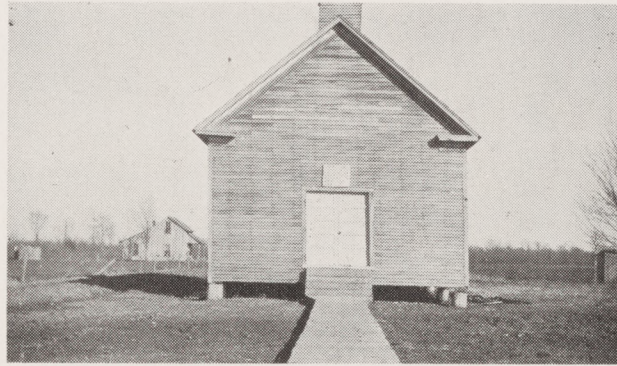
It has been over 70 years since farm workers first attempted to organize in the United States.

The first recorded effort to organize farm workers occurred in Louisiana in 1879. Former slaves working as hired laborers on sugar plantations were inspired by an organizer of the Knights of Labor to set up an association to raise wages. Bands of workers marched through the plantations calling on everyone to stop work. The state militia was called out to suppress the uprising and the leaders of the strike were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms for "trespassing." The following year they were paroled by the governor upon a petition being filed by a Negro member of the state legislature.

Near the end of the nineteenth century, the American Federation of Labor chartered the first in a long series of local unions of farm workers. The first organization of farm workers to organize under A.F. of L. auspices was a group of cow punchers on a huge cattle ranch in West Texas. Some years later, the A.F. of L. chartered a national union of sheep shearers.



## *Here the Union Was Formed*



Fairview Plantation School

The history of labor unionism in agriculture is long and tragic. Literally hundreds of organizations have sprung up, lived briefly and died, but this is the story of a union of workers in the fields which has lived for 25 years.

"You go to the fields and work all day  
'Til after dark, and you get no pay  
Just a little piece of meat and a little turn of corn  
It's hell to be a sharecropper on the Norcross farm."

The hope that Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal inspired in the poorest people of the nation and the desperation the farm policies of the New Deal produced, combined to midwife the event.

When the Triple A benefits began to be distributed throughout the cotton country in the South, they stopped at the landlord, and operated to drive the sharecroppers off the land.

Actually the law provided certain undefined assurance for the sharecroppers. Landlords were required to maintain the same number of tenant farmers, despite acreage reductions. Land taken out of production was to be allotted to tenants so they could grow food for their families and livestock. There was even the shadow of a promise that the landlords would share their government payments equally with their tenants.

At the Fairview Plantation, as was the case throughout the cotton country, the plantation owner Hiram Norcross ignored the rights of his sharecroppers under the law, and notified many of them that their services were no longer required, and their tenure was at an end.

At this moment, the sharecroppers on the Fairview Plantation placed their faith in the expectation of justice the New Deal aroused in them.

They organized a union. They hired a lawyer to go to court to enforce what they had been told were their rights under the AAA. And they sent a delegation to Washington and put their case before Henry Wallace, the New Deal Secretary of Agriculture.

The sharecroppers' law suit was tossed out of court on a technicality. What happened in Washington is part of the history of the nation and of the Union.

Just south of the little town of Tyrone, in Poinsett County, Arkansas, the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union had its beginning. In the early part of July, 1934, eighteen white and black men, clad in overalls, gathered in a rickety and dingy little schoolhouse called Sunnyside.

... "Are we going to have two unions", someone asked, "one for the whites and one for the colored?"

... An old man with cotton-white hair overhanging an ebony face, rose to his feet. ... He had been a member of a black man's union in Elaine, Arkansas. He had seen the union with its membership wiped out in the bloody Elaine Massacre of 1919. "We colored people can't organize without you," he said, "and you white folks can't organize without us."

... A white sharecropper of great ability, Alvin Nunnally, was elected chairman. A Negro minister, C. H. Smith, was chosen vice-chairman. An Englishman with a ready hand for keeping minutes and writing letters was chosen secretary. A Holiness preacher was elected chaplain. Some of the men had belonged to lodges and they wanted to introduce all of the secret rites of the fraternal orders into the union. Some of them had formerly ridden with the Ku Klux Klan and they thought it would be a good idea for the union to operate in secret and for the sharecroppers to ride the roads at night, punishing dishonest landlords and oppressive managers or riding bosses. One of the men had formerly been a member



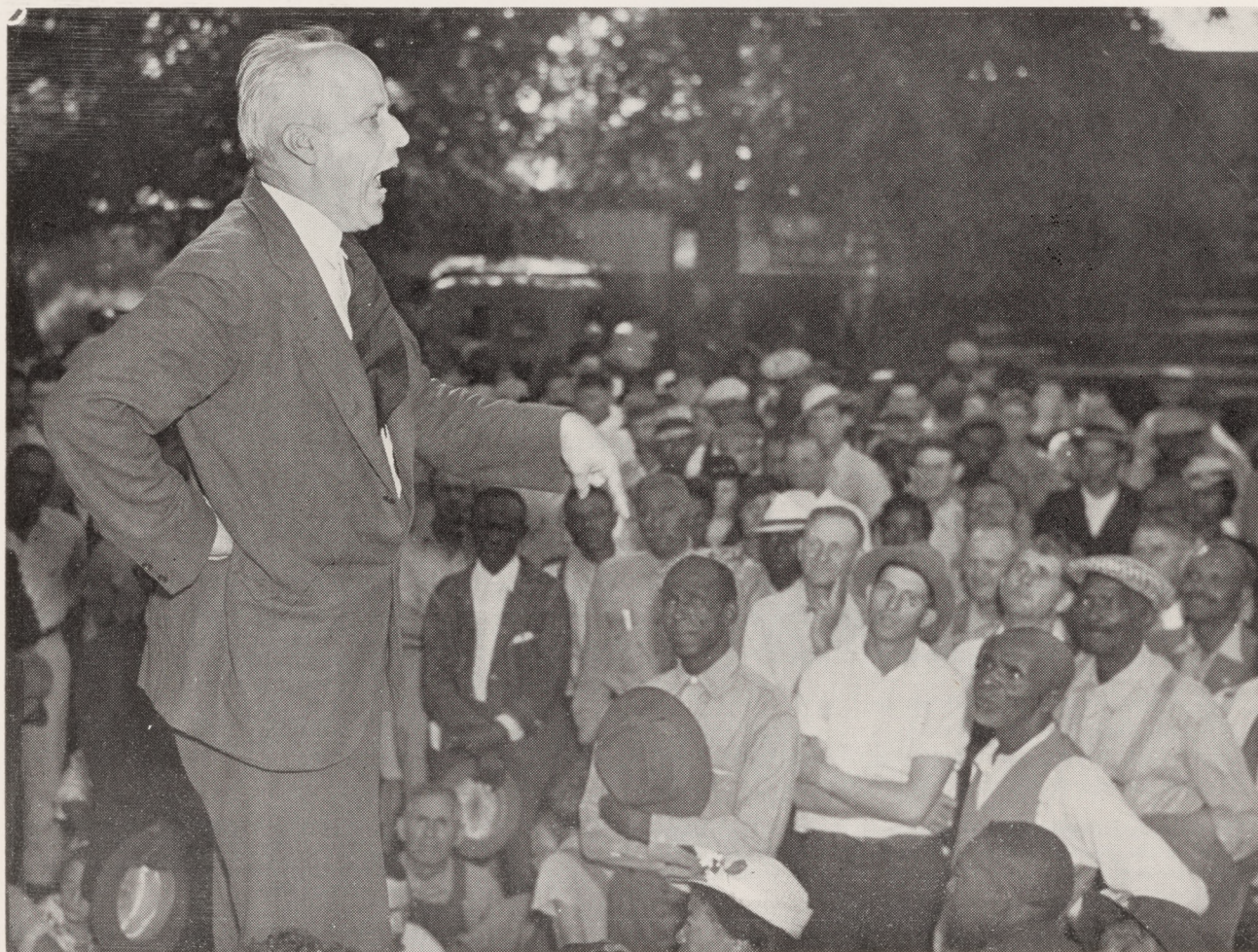
of the Farmer's Educational and Co-operative Union (National Farmers Union) and advanced the idea that it would be best to have the union made a legal organization and for it to operate in the open. The men agreed that this was the best policy and they turned their minds toward accomplishing this.

Someone suggested that H. L. Mitchell and Clay East might help them. Mitchell, once a sharecropper himself, was the

proprietor of a small dry cleaning establishment in Tyronza. Next door to him, Clay East ran a filling station. The two men were known throughout the countryside as "square-shooters."

On July 26, 1934, the organization was incorporated under the laws of the State of Arkansas as the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. The papers were taken out in White County and a certificate of incorporation was received.

#### SHARECROPPERS MEET



Norman Thomas Speaks

AP Photo 1935

#### TERROR IN ARKANSAS

Soon afterward, the Union held a meeting at Birdsong, seat of a church, a few stores and several dwellings. The meeting had scarcely started when a mob of planters and deputy sheriffs led by a riding boss invaded the meeting. The speakers were hustled out of the churchyard into automobiles and told "to get, and don't never come back here, for we ain't going to have our 'niggers' spoiled by no damn union."

The speaker who was pulled from the platform was Norman Thomas, well known Socialist leader, who was the first to call public attention to the plight of the sharecropper. Norman Thomas, often called the Godfather of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, was for many years its advisor and vigorous supporter.

Ward Rodgers and another minister, G. H. Smith, went to

Crittenden County to organize a large local. They succeeded in holding the meeting without any trouble, but two days later Smith was caught while riding with a land salesman and was dragged from the car by a group of riding bosses and deputy sheriffs. He was taken to the woods and beaten, and afterwards was thrown into jail.

Churches where the Union had been meeting were padlocked, windows were boarded over and the floors removed. The schoolhouses were packed with hay. Tenants who were active in the Union were given eviction notices long before the usual moving time, which is about January 1st.

Four union organizers, two white and two colored men, were working together in Cross County. One night they were holding a meeting in a Negro church near Parkin, seat of the recent murder of a sharecropper by plantation owners and managers, when the high sheriff of the county, accompanied



by a large band of deputies, riding bosses and planters broke up the meeting and arrested the four organizers. The men were roughly handled and the union chaplain, A.B. Brookins, well past sixty, was brutally kicked in the face and stomach. Though severely injured, Brookins was refused medical at-

tention until the next day when the sheriff brought a doctor to see him.

Full of faith and hope, five men were sent to Washington. Pennies were scraped together at every union meeting to send the sharecroppers' ambassadors to Washington.



AN EARLY UNION MEETING

Photo by Boyle

H. L. Mitchell describes the events that follow:

I had a letter which Dr. Amberson had given me, to his old friend, Paul Appleby, who was one of Wallace's assistants. I told the secretary that I had a letter addressed to Mr. Appleby, and asked if this could be sent in to Mr. Appleby, and if we could talk to him.

When Paul Appleby came out, we told him that we wanted a real investigation of the problems of the sharecroppers in Arkansas; that the Department had sent investigators down there on the basis of our complaints, and that they had come back and just whitewashed the plantation owners. He said, "I am going to get Henry Wallace out here to talk to you." Wallace then came out to see us and talked with us for thirty minutes or more. He told us, "I have an investigator who has just come to work with our legal department, Mrs. Mary Connor Myers. Mrs. Myers has worked on the Al Capone case with the Department of Justice." Wallace promised to send her down to make an investigation. We were very happy about this. Wallace also told us, "I don't want you fellows to go back and say who is coming or what's coming. You go back and say to your members that you saw Henry Wallace and he told you that something is going to be done; that we are going to look into this matter and take action.

#### THE DELEGATION REPORTS AT MARKED TREE

The first speaker for the Washington delegation was the Rev. E.B. McKinney, "pillar of granite in a weary land." Chairman Rodgers introduced the speaker. On the outskirts of the crowd were the prosecuting attorney, Fred Stafford, the high sheriff of the county, W. E. Dubard, and all the "better Americans" were assembled, a murmur stirred the already stiffening breeze, "he called that 'nigger' mister."

Preacher Rodgers walked to the edge of the platform. As he jumped down, the prosecuting attorney, Fred Stafford, formerly of Detroit and a native of Canada, placed him under arrest. Rodgers was charged with "anarchy", "attempting to overthrow and usurp the Government of Arkansas," and "blasphemy."

#### THE TRIAL OF WARD RODGERS

The trial was ridiculous. We referred to it as a kangaroo court trial. The prosecuting attorney made many charges against Rodgers, saying he was a foreign agitator who had come down there to teach the "niggers" to read and write.

Stafford said that Rodgers called "niggers" mister and he



described him as being a foreigner from that "Yankee school, Vanderbilt University." He apparently did not know that Vanderbilt is at Nashville, Tennessee, not 200 miles from where the trial was taking place. Rodgers was never (except in this hearing) actually brought to trial on those wild charges, because there was no real basis for them. The case was held over for two or three terms of the court, and it was finally dismissed.

While violence of one type or another had been continuously poured out upon the membership of the Union from its early beginning, it was in March, 1935, that a "reign of terror" ripped throughout northeastern Arkansas and in neighboring states, until at times it seemed as if the Union would be completely smashed. Meetings were banned and broken up; members were falsely accused, arrested and jailed; convicted on trumped up charges and thrown into prison; relief was shut off; Union members were evicted from the land by the hundreds; homes were riddled with bullets from machine guns; churches were burned, and schoolhouses were stuffed with hay and the floors removed; highways were patrolled night and day by armed vigilantes looking for the leaders; organizers were beaten, mobbed and murdered and the entire country was terrorized.



UNION ORGANIZER

#### LETTERS

Dear Sir. I received your letter with the blanks some time ago. I was untell now making up my mind to write to you. Because I was threatened with a flogging for keeping in communication with you. However my flogging is put off untill I pick enough to pay my debt, provided that I have no more to do with the union.

\* \* \*

Dear Sir: Now that the Strike is on and I have no Job and is Trying to obay orders, untell other orders are Sent out for This cause I am Suffering for I am in need. We have a few That is Trying to be True to the Cause, but many have been Forced to disobay orders. I would have wrote you before now, but the members Said it wouldnt be good for me to write as Things was Stired up, but I couldnt waite any longer. I want to be loyal, yet do my duty. I am looking for prompt attention.

#### THE STRIKE

For months the Southern Tenants Farmers Union had been preparing to call the cotton pickers out of the fields on strike against starvation wages.

The Union told the strikers not to resist arrest, but to be willing to go to jail. "Fill every jail in Arkansas, but don't pick cotton until Union prices are met," was the organizers' message to the strikers. Scores of men were arrested and some jails were crammed with strikers. Violence reared its head, but the cotton hung in its boll as the strikers stayed in their cabins.

## Cotton Pickers! STRIKE!

**For \$1 per 100 lbs**  
**Refuse to pick a boll for less!**

**Strike on every farm or plantation where**  
**cotton is being picked for wages!**

**Accept No Less Than The Union Prices----**  
**\$1 per 100 lbs**

**Strike Call Effective TODAY**  
**Special Committee**  
**SOUTHERN TENANT FARMERS UNION**

**See Instructions for local strikes**  
**Committees**

**Please Pass This On**

The Union's First Handbill



Our system, used for the first time, was to have handbills printed. The delegates to the strike committee meeting would take several hundred copies of this handbill and on a specified night, the handbills were distributed all over the plantations at the same time. The handbills were put on fence posts and telephone poles, barn doors, everywhere—saying that a strike was on and that the workers should stay out of the fields. It was the most effective demonstration that could be imagined. In three counties where the Union had just a few members, practically all work stopped.

\* \* \*

"Be of good cheer; be patient; be faithful,  
And help the Union to grow strong.  
And if at any time you become the least discouraged,  
Revive yourself by singing the good old Union song."

\* \* \*

Six days after the strike was called the planters pushed their prices from a low of sixty-five cents per hundred pounds, to a high of one dollar. The Union had asked for a dollar a hundred. A State Department labor official from Little Rock made a trip through the cotton country to see how effective the strike was. He reported that he saw only two workers picking cotton. The strike was effective and

the cotton hung in the bolls until the Union told the men to go back to work.

What happens in an agricultural area where there is a strike is that a form of bargaining between employers and employees develops. What happens in one area affected by a strike is reflected in other nearby areas.

\* \* \*

"It's seventy miles to Memphis  
It's a hundred and twenty to Wardell,  
It's a thousand miles from here to civilization,  
But only a few steps from here to hell."

\* \* \*

#### THE SENATE INVESTIGATION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

In 1935 when Evelyn Smith, Howard Kester and our lawyer, Herman Goldberger, went over to Arkansas, Goldberger was beaten by a plantation mob. Evelyn was with Kester. She had a camera with her and had made some pictures of the men while they were striking Goldberger. The men took the camera away from her and destroyed the film. They also broke up the meeting with barrel staves. They clubbed the sharecroppers, men and women alike, but put Kester and



(Photo by Boyle)

COTTON PICKERS WEIGH IN



the lawyer in the car and told them to get out of Arkansas and never return.

After his experience when the meeting was broken up at Earle, Arkansas, Kester went to Washington and told Gardner Jackson about it. "Pat" (Gardner) Jackson told Mrs. Ethel Clyde (of the steamship family) and persuaded her to finance a dinner at the Cosmos Club. At this dinner a group of senators and congressmen discussed "off the record" the state of civil liberties in the country and the interference with the rights of unions to organize. Kester was the number one exhibit, having just gone through the ordeal in Arkansas. As a result of that meeting, it was agreed that Bob LaFollette, Jr. would introduce the bill for the Senate Committee on Civil Liberties. This was the

way the famous LaFollette Committee started, and it led to an expose of methods used to deny all labor the right to organize. The notorious Associated Farmers of California were exposed—soon the Wagner Act was enacted—but the nation's farm workers were excluded from its benefits.

In 1935 a resolution was introduced in the A.F. of L. convention by Barney Egan, a delegate from Texas. He represented the Typographical Union. It pledged the A.F. of L. to give sympathetic consideration to our organization. The first battle we got into was a strike of cotton pickers in 1935, and President William Green sent out an appeal to all A.F. of L. affiliates to help the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. This appeal brought in about \$1,000, which was a big amount of money in those days.

I am proud to pay tribute to the courage of those men who in 1934 organized a union in the interests of tenant farmers, in the dark days of the great depression when all too often the rights of the worker on the farm and in the factory were ignored.

Undaunted by violent opposition and efforts to stir up racial antagonisms, the Union struggled onward, first to improve the lot of the sharecropper, then to protect the interests of all agricultural workers. I congratulate the Union, its wise and brave leader, H. L. Mitchell, and his able and dedicated associates on their valiant efforts to improve conditions of agricultural labor.

May America never forget that as long as festers of substandard working conditions, extreme poverty, helpless insecurity and racial discrimination exist within our borders, our beloved land fails of its great promise.

PAUL H. DOUGLAS  
U.S. Senator, Illinois

### THE UNION GROWS

The Union also spread to Oklahoma. A very interesting individual, Odis Sweeden, picked up some old papers one morning and read about the Union having won a strike in Arkansas. The Union's address was included in the accounts so he wrote and said he wanted to help organize. Sweeden was about three-fourths Cherokee Indian and came

from Muskogee. He had been active in various relief organizations, and he set out to organize the sharecroppers and tenant farmers of Oklahoma. This was late in 1935 or early in 1936, about the time the dust storms were going on out there, and the migration to California described in John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" was really starting. In a year Sweeden had built quite an organization, with 75 or 80 local unions and about 1,000 members.

### EARLY UNION LEADERS



Clay East



H. L. Mitchell



J. R. Butler



Howard Kester

Clay East was first President of STFU, H. L. Mitchell, Executive Secretary, J. R. Butler, Chief Organizer, who became third President of STFU, and Howard Kester, editor of union's first paper, the Sharecroppers Voice.

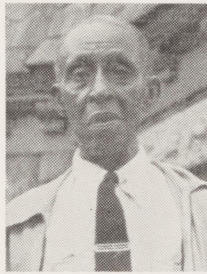
It was some time before we held our second convention. We selected a man who seemed to show promise as a president. His name was W. H. Stultz. He was the first president who was a sharecropper, and the only one except me who had ever been a sharecropper. After Stultz had just been elected president, for some months there was a movement to take over the Union. This movement was led by J. O.

Green. Green had talked to me about his idea of having everyone in the Union wear a green shirt, and he had a drawing of a hooked cross which he wanted to use as a symbol of the Union.

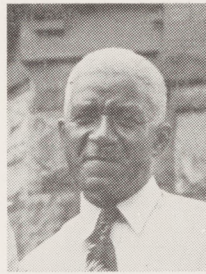
We had a trial over the property of the Union and when Stultz found out who was behind this move, he went to our lawyer and made a statement saying that the plantation owners had hired Green to break up the Union. When our lawyer read Stultz's statement at the trial, the case was dismissed. That was the end of the Green Shirt movement.



## Early Union Leaders



Brookins



Betton



Shaw

On the left is Rev. A. B. Brookins, cotton field preacher—the Union's Chaplain and Song Leader. Brookins' home near Marked Tree, Arkansas was riddled with machine gunfire by night riders, and his 10 year old daughter was hit by a ricocheting bullet as she cowered on the cabin floor.

Next is F. R. Betton of Cotton Plant, Ark., tenant farmer, Vice President of the Union, 1938-1959. Isaac Shaw, one of the 18 men who founded the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. Although unable to read or write, Shaw spoke English like a well educated man.

A new day came to American farming and to the entire labor movement in 1934 when a group of farmers with vision founded the National Agricultural Workers Union on a cotton plantation in Arkansas.

May the 50th anniversary be one of joyous celebration of evils long overcome!

WAYNE MORSE  
U.S. Senator, Oregon

Our Union's conventions were always characterized by religious fervor and singing; Biblical phrases were used as slogans. From the beginning of the Union, all of the Union meetings were opened with prayer. There was much singing, especially among the Negro members, most of whom had excellent voices. They sang the old Negro spirituals. Many of them are songs of protest which grew out of conditions existing before slavery was abolished. Some of the spirituals seemed to fit in with the Union program. One of them for instance, was selected as the official Union song. This was, "We Shall Not Be Moved." The words were—"Just like a tree planted by the water, we shall not be moved." And the following words were added—"The

Union is a'marching, we shall not be moved." In the Union conventions there was a mixture of slogans which we put in the form of banners and signs; many of them were Biblical quotations, and others came out of the old Populist movement. One of these slogans was "The land is the common heritage of the people."

The Union's initiation fee was 25 cents at that time. Membership dues were 10 cents a month, or \$1 a year, and after 3 years about 50,000 members were enrolled, but the majority of these never paid dues on a regular basis as in craft or industrial unions. The Union was different in other ways too.



Paul D. Peacher  
Plantation mob leader



Willie Sue Blagden  
Flogged by Arkansas planters

### JUSTICE DEFERRED

Spencer McCullough, the top labor reporter of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, came to Forrest City, Ark. and got all the information about the story—who had been beaten and all the details. He talked to Clay East and J. R. Butler, and also to Paul Peacher who had broken up the marches in Earle, Arkansas, and to those who had taken part in the flogging of the woman. McCullough wrote a series of articles in the St. Louis Post Dispatch. He was the type of reporter who would go right in to the plantation owners or the Ku Klux Klan and get their side of the story before he ever came to see the victims. As a result of such publicity, Peacher was arrested and this was one of the first of the peonage cases to occur in the South. Peacher was accused of holding forty-odd men in peonage, making them work on his private plantation. He had a stockade and kept the men behind high walls and under guard. They were taken out to work in the day and were taken back to the stockade at night until they had completed serving their term. The Department of Justice sent special prosecutors who secured the first conviction on peonage in many years. Peacher was fined and was also given a suspended prison sentence.



## Time Marches On

After the 1936 strike was over, the March of Time made a 30 minute movie about it. They reenacted many of the incidents—the flogging of Willie Sue Blagden and Claude Williams, and the Marches of the Union members. The Marchers became actors and the March of Time paid them for it. The movie, “King Cotton,” was very good and was shown in 8,000 movie theaters throughout the country. One report we had of the March of Time was that down in the Mississippi Delta where we thought the Union would be

immediately suspect, there were cheers for the Union when this film was shown in the theater. I was such a poor actor that I did not appear in the movie. The cameraman spent an entire day trying to get me to re-enact a scene in which I was ordering Claude Williams to go over to Arkansas to investigate the killing of Frank Weems, but I never could get it just right. They also had an unusual experience with Pat Jackson. Pat’s voice was so strong that it broke the sound track machine, but Pat does appear in the film.

We of the Socialist Party are proud of the support we have given you from the very earliest days of your union. We pledge our continued aid in every possible way in the days ahead.

IRWIN SUALL, National Secretary  
Socialist Party—Social Democratic Federation

### THE SHARECROPPER MINSTREL

John Handcox was born and reared in St. Francis County, Arkansas, on one of the big plantations whose workers went on strike. He had about a 4th grade education. I encouraged him to write more poems and songs, and he began singing his songs at our Union meetings. His best one became very popular. This was “We’re Gonna Roll the Union On.” It is a stirring song, but I have never known where the melody originated. It too appears to be based on a spiritual. Originally it contained the following sentence: “If the governor’s in the way, we’re gonna roll it over him, gonna roll it over him, gonna roll the Union on.” That referred of course to Governor J. Marion Futrell of Arkansas who ordered the National Guard out during the 1936 strike. Handcox also wrote another song, “Hungry, Hungry Are We.” All of John Handcox’s union songs were recorded and are now in the folk song collection of the Congressional Library in Washington.

“It was in nineteen hundred and thirty six  
And on the ninth of June  
When the STFU pulled a strike  
That troubled the planters on their thrones.  
The planters they all became troubled,  
Not knowing what ’twas all about,  
But they said, ‘One thing I’m sure we can do,  
That’s scare them sharecroppers out.’”

#### We’re Gonna Roll

We’re gonna roll, we’re gonna roll,  
We’re gonna roll the Union on;  
We’re gonna roll, we’re gonna roll,  
We’re gonna roll the Union on.

If the planter’s in the way  
We’re gonna roll it over him,  
We’re gonna roll it over him,  
We’re gonna roll it over him,  
We’re gonna roll the Union on.

If the boss is in the way  
We’re gonna roll it over him  
We’re gonna roll the Union on.

If the governor’s in the way  
We’re gonna roll it over him  
We’re gonna roll the Union on.



Photo by March of Time

H. L. Mitchell, Executive Secretary  
STFU in 1936

#### Raggedy Are We

Hungry, hungry are we  
Just as hungry as hungry can be,  
We don’t get nothing for our labor,  
So hungry, hungry are we.

Raggedy, raggedy are we,  
Just as raggedy as raggedy can be,  
We don’t get nothing for our labor,  
So hungry, hungry are we.

Homeless, homeless are we  
Just as homeless as homeless can be  
We don’t get nothing for our labor,  
So homeless, homeless are we.

Landless, landless are we  
Just as landless as landless can be,  
We don’t get nothing for our labor,  
So landless, landless are we.



## FDR ACTS

The formation of the President's Farm Tenancy Commission was largely due to the organization of the union of

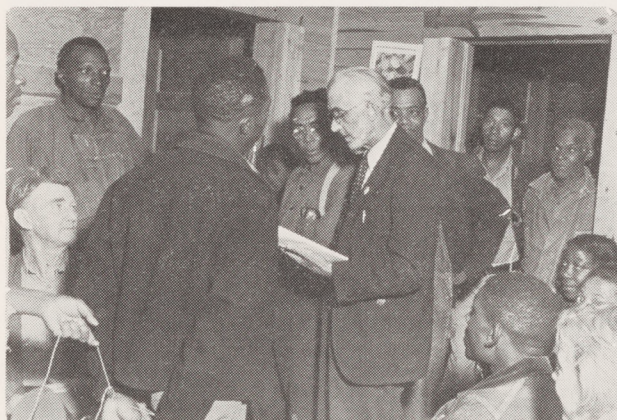


Photo by Boyle

W. L. Blackstone, Arkansas tenant farmer, represented the Union on the President's Commission on Farm Tenancy. Here Blackstone administers "oath" to a new member. The worker's hands were tied with a string until he was sworn, and thus bound by still stronger bonds to his Union.

sharecroppers. If there had not been an organization of sharecroppers making a noise, Roosevelt would never have established a Farm Security Administration or done anything about the problems of farm tenancy.

I do not know who was directly responsible for the creation of the Commission on Farm Tenancy. I know that the group at the University of North Carolina wanted to do something about this problem, and one of these people down there in addition to Dr. Howard Odum and other sociologists, was Dr. Will Alexander. Dr. Alexander afterward became director of the Farm Security Administration. This was an outgrowth of the Farm Tenancy Commission's report. Dr. Alexander also wanted to do something for migratory labor, and his agency built the migrant camps in California, Florida and Texas, as well as some farm labor homes for our members in Missouri.

The Resettlement Administration started as a relief measure. Although they had been experimenting, it was not too clear as to what they were trying to do prior to the President's Tenancy Commission. The President's Commission on Farm Tenancy did lay down the program which afterward became the Farm Security Administration.

~~~~~  
 "If they ask you what's my union,  
 It's the STFU  
 It's the STFU"  
 ~~~~~

## WE JOIN THE C.I.O.



## DELEGATES ATTENDING THE CONVENTION

September 1937

Voted to Join the C.I.O.



Gardner Jackson, who was our representative in Washington, had an appointment with John L. Lewis. Sitting in the outer office were Harry Bridges and Donald Henderson. Henderson was once an assistant professor at Columbia, but was fired by Rex Tugwell. Henderson later became the Communist Party's farm labor expert. Knowing Don very well, Jackson asked them what they were doing there and Henderson explained that they were waiting to see John Lewis because they were going to set up an agricultural and cannery union.

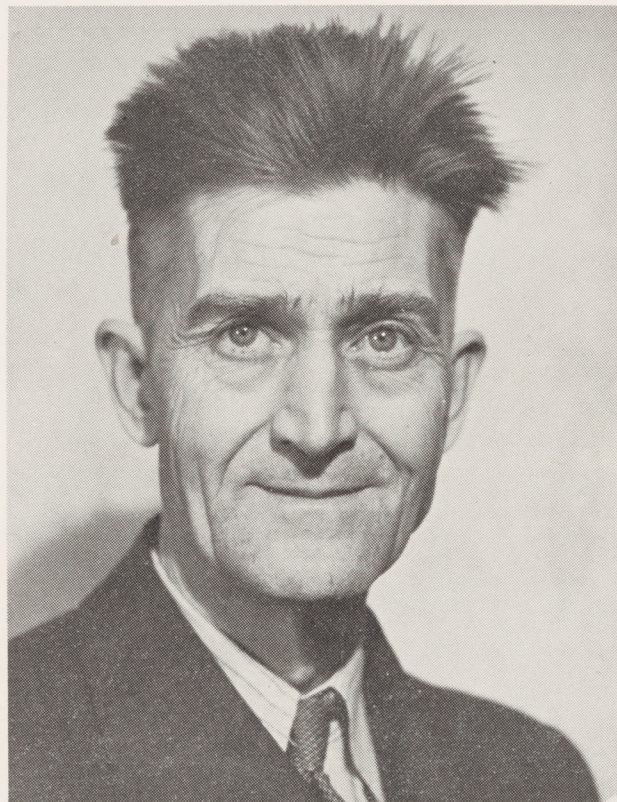
Following the meeting in Lewis' office, Henderson was put in charge of assembling a convention of agricultural and cannery workers' organizations which was held in Denver from July 9 to 11, in 1937.

In 1937, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union participated in the formation of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers (UCAPAWA), chartered by the Congress of Industrial Organizations. After a year the Southern Tenant Farmers Union withdrew from UCAPAWA because of Communist domination. UCAPAWA made various attempts to organize both field and processing workers throughout the country, and had some success among processing workers in food and tobacco plants. Its name was later changed to Food, Tobacco and Agricultural Workers and in 1950, along with other Communist dominated unions, it was expelled by the C.I.O. But the Southern Tenant Farmers Union was the first group to break with the C.I.O. on the Communist issue.

At the convention held in Memphis I wanted to ask John L. Lewis to give us a charter for the STFU. I was defeated on that issue and we became the southern division of the UCAPAWA and Henderson, the president of the union, assured us in the Memphis convention that we would retain our name, our complete autonomy, and continue to handle our own affairs. Our understanding was that there would be no change whatever. We would simply be a part of this new international union. Shortly thereafter, almost as soon as we affiliated, Henderson began to move—to undo what he had promised by having the local unions report directly to the international office in Washington. In other words, he began moving to eliminate our organization as such. The rest of the year, 1937, and all of 1938, was spent largely in one battle after another with the Communist leadership of UCAPAWA. Every time their Executive Board met, the STFU was on the agenda. We were always voted down.

John L. Lewis told us, "If you fail with your international Executive Board, go to the international convention and take this matter up there. If you fail to get satisfaction, then come back to me." "We did exactly as Lewis suggested. We took the problem up with the Executive Board and were voted down, with 4 votes on our side. The convention was held in San Francisco in 1938, and we attended. We had only 9 delegates though we had over 100 locals which were affiliated with the international union. We also had some local unions that refused to affiliate. This meeting was held

in the hall owned by the International Longshoremen, headed by Harry Bridges. One of the main speakers was Harry Bridges, who was also a director of the C.I.O. in California. When our proposition came up, again we were completely voted down.



J. R. Butler

President, Southern Tenant Farmers Union

John Russell Butler, "J.R.," one time tenant farmer, country school teacher, sometimes oil field worker, heard about the Union being organized near Tyronza in July 1934. He left his home and job in White County to volunteer his services. First chosen as chief organizer, he became President of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union early in 1935, and served with distinction for seven years. Retiring in 1942, he has since followed his trade as a skilled machinist, and (1959) is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Memphis, helping organize the unorganized shops in his trade.

Your union is not one of the larger organizations but it is a great force for good in America. You have what many others have lost in acquiring a large membership, big buildings and bulging treasuries.

NORMAN THOMAS

#### WE LEAVE THE C.I.O. AND—THE COMMIES FAIL

We walked to the door and Henderson was still standing there, talking about us. When he saw us he said, "If Mr. Butler and Mr. Mitchell do not leave this hall, I'm going to have them thrown out." Our crowd was all over the house. They said, "You and who else are going to throw them out?" The best description of the others on the platform would be—the thugs of Beale St., the bad boys, the

guys who carried knives and razors. Henderson had at least a dozen strong-arm boys. There must have been 15 men on the platform, and at least half of them had never been to a union meeting before, or anything else respectable. They had been recruited just to protect Henderson. He said, "I've got people here. We can throw any of you out." ... I told Butler to wait there as I was going inside. Henderson was facing a kind of ante-room which was actually a part of the auditorium as it had no door. I walked in front



of Henderson and stood six or eight feet from him. I said, "I think I should have the right to answer this man. He has told one lie after another about me. I'm here and I'm ready to answer." And the crowd said, "Let's hear Mitchell! Let's hear Mitchell!" Henderson called to the fellows at his back, "We'll have to throw Butler and Mitchell out." The whole crowd rose and it looked as though a battle was just about to start so I said as loudly as I possibly could, "Everyone who wants to stay in a real union, follow me down the stairs." Henderson was left with his 15 men sitting on the platform, and if they had not been in his pay, I am sure that would have followed the crowd too.

After leaving the hall we all went to the yard in front of the Labor Temple and walked a short way up the street. Brother A. B. Brookins, who was the original song leader and Union chaplain, a small Negro about 65 years old, told me, "I know what we should do. Just let me go down

there and do it myself. I'll go down and get Mr. Don Henderson, take him to the foot of Beale St. on the Mississippi River and make a Christian out of him. I'll baptize him." Of course Brookins could not have done this even if he wanted to, because by that time Henderson had left town and as far as I know, he never returned to Memphis.

The next day we applied to the U.S. District Court for an injunction enjoining Henderson from using the name of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. The judge was prepared to sign the order and Henderson had a lawyer who was an attorney for the C.I.O. there. So his lawyer just agreed with our lawyer, to sign such a document. In fact, our lawyer came down from New York to help do this job. He is now quite a prominent lawyer, Morris Shapiro. He drafted a court order which prohibited Henderson from operating anywhere south of the Mason-Dixon line.



#### A Convention Committee Reports

1. Left to right: Evelyn Smith, first office Secretary of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. She worked with the Union from 1935 to 1940.
2. E. B. McKinney, first Vice President, Southern Tenant Farmers Union (1934-1938), "a pillar of granite in a weary land."
3. Douglas Cobb, Union leader, Twist Plantation.
4. Leon Turner, Secretary, Jefferson County (Ark.) Union.
5. Claude Williams, beaten by plantation mob along with Miss Blagden in 1936 strike.
6. W. B. Moore, Union organizer of Blytheville, Ark.

About a year after the Southern Tenant Farmers Union broke away from the C.I.O., I stopped overnight in Muskogee at the little hotel where we union folks normally stayed. I knew all of the people who worked there, from the manager on down to the bellboys. One of the bell hops, a rather elderly and dignified Negro, showed me to my room. When I asked him if he had seen Mr. Sweeden recently, he replied, "You know, I ain't see Mr. Odis in months. Last time I saw him he was up here to see that little black haired man from New York." I asked him if he meant

the man from C.I.O., Don Henderson. He replied that he was referring to Don Henderson and added, "One night about 11 o'clock, there was nobody on duty downstairs but the night clerk and me. We heard a loud racket up in Mr. Henderson's room that sounded like a free-for-all fight going on. The clerk said to me, 'Johnnie, go see what's the matter with those fellows. Sounds like they are tearing up the hotel!' I rushed upstairs and when I got to the door of Mr. Henderson's room, it was about half open. He and Mr. Sweeden were cussing each other. Just as I pushed the door open, I saw Mr. Sweeden swing a pot right on top of the little man's head. That pot got hung on his head and the clerk and I almost never got it off. Mr. Henderson's head just fit that chamber pot. His nose was bleeding and he was all skinned up. He left here the next day and I ain't seen him or Mr. Sweeden since."

~~~~~  
 "I'm goin' down this road feelin' bad;  
 I'm goin' down this road feeling bad.  
 I'm goin' down this road feelin' bad, Lord God  
 'Cause I ain't gonna be treated thisaway."  
 ~~~~~



## On the Move



Courtesy NAACP

Photo by George Moffett

### EVICCTIONS IN MISSOURI

After the so-called convention held by Henderson in Memphis and we were out of the C.I.O., the Missouri demonstration occurred. This took place out on the highway when some 1,500 people moved out of their homes in January, 1939. They were being evicted from the plantations and had been notified they would all have to move. This was the change from sharecropping to a wage labor system. The plantation owners had no need for many of the workers full time, and they told them there would be no sharecrops in 1939. Some of them were told they could stay if they wanted to work for wages by the day, others had been told that they must get some other place to live by February 1st. In southeast Missouri where we had an organization, the highway sitdown occurred, and Owen Whitfield, who had taken Butler's place as Vice President of UCAPAWA, was the leader of the demonstration. These people moved out of their homes in the middle of a snowstorm and camped along the side of the highway, Negroes and whites alike. Some of them were members of the Union, but a lot of them were not. It was one of the most remarkable things that had happened up to that time. It attracted attention all over the country.

I was able to get an appointment with Mrs. Roosevelt one afternoon and told her about the people out on the highway. I asked her if she would ask the President to get the Missouri National Guard to furnish tents, and if she would help us to get food down there. She said she would. That was the first time I had met Mrs. Roosevelt and I was quite impressed with her personality, her quick

grasp of the Missouri situation, and her willingness to help people. I waited about thirty minutes in a big red room in the White House to see Mrs. Roosevelt. The room had been cleared of most of the furniture, there were just a few chairs there. When Mrs. Roosevelt came in, she apologized for being late and explained that like most ladies, it took her longer to dress than she thought it would. She listened to the story and said she would ask the President to order the National Guard to furnish tents for these people and said she would do more than that—she would write an appeal for help in her column the next day and would ask that help be sent to the people down there by individuals and others, through the Union. She did all of that. I returned to Memphis by train and before I arrived there, an order had come down from the President to the National Guard in Jefferson City, Mo. and the trucks were loaded with tents, field kitchens, and all equipment needed to take care of the people on the highways. But the National Guard never arrived. The Missouri planters broke up the demonstration and put the people back in houses on the plantations.

After the break with C.I.O., we did not have much of a union left. When we first joined the C.I.O. we had about 50,000 followers, and some four or five thousand were paying dues on an irregular basis. When this fight was over we did not have 1,000 members who were paying dues. We had lost many members, but the other side had even less than we did.

Soon the Southern Tenant Farmers Union made an application to the A.F. of L. for a charter and a delegation appeared before the Executive Council of AFL. They could



see no value in having a union of sharecroppers. They said there was no economic basis for such an organization, and denied the application. They meant they could not see a dues paying, self-sustaining membership with what the

Southern Tenant Farmers Union had. However, the Executive Council made a general statement about giving support to the Union and helping us on legislation and things of that sort.

↓  
Summarize the rest

Your Union has fought almost alone in the forefront of the battle to improve working and living conditions in one of the most neglected areas of our national economy.

THOMAS J. DODD  
U.S. Senator, Connecticut

### PEARL HARBOR

I was in New York on December 7, when the Japs attacked Pearl Harbor. I remember telling Jonathan Daniels the next day that not much would be heard of the Union until the war ended. But our membership did not fall off. We worked out a program with the Farm Security Administration and the U.S. Employment Service whereby we recruited workers for jobs in other farm areas. It worked very well for a while, until Congress passed an amendment prohibiting the recruitment or transportation of domestic farm workers unless each individual worker had the written permission of the county agent where he lived, to move from that county. Actually, the law froze Southern farm labor for the duration of the war. The Government started to import Mexican workers, and we said we could supply all of the workers who were needed from the South if the Government would provide their transportation.

The Union recruited 1,500 workers and the transportation (train tickets) was free. Special trains loaded with farm

workers were sent by the Farm Security Administration to pick cotton in the West. In the spring of 1943, we sent 500 more men to Florida.

Some of the workers we sent on these jobs were from southeast Missouri where they lived on a Farm Security Administration project, following the sit-down strike in Missouri when the evicted sharecroppers moved out onto the highway in the middle of the winter in 1939. After this was over, some 600 homes were built in this cotton growing section of Missouri and they were called the Delmo Labor Homes Project.

The Union and Government program did not last long. It ended when Congress passed the Mexican importation law, probably because of our Union's recruitment of these workers, and also to prevent the movement of farm labor out of the South. And in addition to that, when the Government imposed gasoline and tire rationing, it then became more difficult for individual farm workers to get out of the South on their own.



During World War II the Southern Tenant Farmers Union and Local 56, Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workman of N.A. worked out a program of organized migration of southern farm workers to meet seasonal labor shortages in canneries and on farms of New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania and other states. Over 10,000 men and women were transferred to and from short term jobs. No children were ever sent on Union jobs. Here was an embryo program for ending the evils of migratory labor.

In 1943, when many Nazi prisoners of war were being taken and thousands of them were being shipped over here, they proposed to put these prisoners of war directly into the canning plants, as well as on the farms where regular

union members of Local 56 were employed. Leon Schachter got in touch with the A.F. of L. in Washington and asked them if there was any way that they could help stop the use of prisoners of war in the unionized canning plants.

Frank Fenton of the A.F. of L. told him that he should get in touch with H. L. Mitchell down in Memphis. So Schachter called me and asked if I could send some workers up there. I said we could, that we could send any number he wanted. He said, "The problem is that they are trying to bring in 500 prisoners of war to use in one plant and we don't want Nazis working with our members." He asked me to write a letter to him saying that we could furnish 500 men within two weeks. I did this.



Then he worked out a program with some of the canning plant employers whereby they furnished the transportation for workers that we recruited and sent from the South. Altogether, over the three or four years of the war, an average of 3,000 workers a year were sent to New Jersey alone. The total number was in excess of 10,000 individual workers sent up there during the war period.

### THE WAGE FREEZE

Right after the war, wage ceilings were placed on farm wages all over the country. This was part of the War Labor Board's program. The Government figured out some sort of formula whereby wages in agriculture would not be more than \$200 a month, or \$2,400 a year. They tried to apply this formula to the picking of cotton, fruits and vegetables, and similar work which is done on a piece rate basis. It often meant that the wages of the workers were reduced. The Union took up this fight too, and we had quite a battle over this attempt to set a ceiling on the wages of people who were already paid so little that they could barely earn a living. In the end, we won that fight, too.

### A.F. OF L. ENTERS FARM FIELD

On one of my trips to Washington I talked with Mr. Green, and he said the A.F. of L. Council would meet in Chicago soon, and he suggested that I go out there and put my proposition up to them again.

We followed Mr. Green's suggestion and sent a delegation to Chicago. The fact that we had worked with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen and carried on the organized migration plan in New Jersey with Leon Schachter was most helpful to us. Patrick E. Gorman, the Secretary of the Amalgamated and the chief officer of that union, and Schachter both appeared before the Executive Council to speak for us at the time we made our request for a charter. By that time, we had also changed the name of the Union from Southern Tenant Farmers Union to—National Farm Labor Union.

Much to the surprise of all of us, after we had appeared before the Executive Council in the morning and Pat Gorman had made a plea that we be given a charter, Mr. Green came out afterward and said, "Why don't you men wait around until this afternoon. There may be some more questions that members of the Council will want to ask."

As soon as the Executive Council adjourned at 12:30, Mr. Green told me that Dan Tobin of the Teamsters wanted to see me. Dan Tobin wanted to be sure that if the charter were issued to us, we would not claim the workers in dairy plants. The Teamsters Union had nearly all dairy plants organized so they wanted to be sure that we were not going to claim dairies in our jurisdiction. I assured him that we would not try to take anything anybody else had,

that what we wanted was a charter and the right to organize all unorganized agricultural workers.

Shortly thereafter, Green gave me a letter saying that the Executive Council had acted favorably on our request for a charter, and the request was granted. The charter was issued August 25, 1946, and again we became a part of organized labor.

Our first convention after we received our charter from A.F. of L. was held in Washington. President Green of A.F. of L. was the main speaker, and we had a radio broadcast announcing that this new A.F. of L. affiliate was starting in to organize the nation's agricultural workers. There was a lot of publicity—we had always been able to get attention from the newspapers. This convention was in January, 1947. Here for the first time I met Ernesto Galarza, later secretary of the Union. Galarza had been working for the Pan American Union as chief of the labor and information division of that official inter-American organization composed of all nations in the Western Hemisphere. Galarza was tired of the Pan American Union's failure to do anything about the problems of Latin-American workers, particularly the 90% who are agricultural workers or peasants. Latin-American politicians were, of course, just as they are now. Galarza had resigned from the Pan American Union and at the time of our convention was lecturing on Latin-American problems throughout the country. Galarza is one of the few, if not the only labor leader with a Ph.D.

### Ballad of The Di Giorgio Strikers

Pickets standing on the line  
Loking down the country road,  
Saw a lonesome stranger coming  
And he said his name was Joad.

Now the stranger stood beside us  
And his face was pale and thin,  
Said he'd like to join the Union  
So we said we'd let him in.

Thursday night he came to meeting  
And he raised his snowy head,  
With a voice like Resurrection  
Spoke, and this is what he said:

"There's a fence around Creation,  
There's a mortgage on the sun,  
They have put electric meters  
Where the rivers used to run."

"God Almighty made the valley  
For a land of milk and honey,  
But a corporation's got it  
For to turn it into money."

In this era of bigness and vertical integration in agriculture, operators of family-size farms and farm workers have need more than ever for strength that organization makes possible.

JAMES G. PATTON  
President, National Farmers Union

### CORPORATE FARMING

Several significant strikes, led by the AFL National Agricultural Workers Union, took place on the west coast from 1947 to 1953. A strike of 1,100 workers on the Di Giorgio Corporation Ranch in California started in 1947. From this experience the Union learned that it was not possible to organize successfully a single large corporation farm unit in a closely knit agricultural area. In 1949 the Union led

a strike of 40,000 cotton workers employed on all large farms in the same area of production and won recognition as the bargaining agent. Due to lack of finances to employ organizers, it was impossible to capitalize on this victory fully, but we gained nearly 10,000 members.

### Di Giorgio

In the meantime, the Union had gotten underway in California and with help from the State Federation of Labor



and some of the larger unions, had begun to recruit members. We succeeded on one of the largest farms in California, the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation, near Bakersfield. There were about 1,500 workers employed, including supervisors, and some 1,100 of them had joined the Union. The situation was very bad. Wages were low, hours long—miserable conditions all the way round. The owner was an Italian, an old man who had built up a huge business. We did not know it at the time but we afterward found out that we had tackled one of the largest fruit corporations in the country, a hundred million dollar corporation which owned controlling interest in the New York Fruit Exchange, owned Baltimore's Fruit Exchange outright, and had an interest in every market in the country. The Di Giorgio ranch had 12,000 acres, a packing plant, and what was then called the world's largest winery. The winery was organized by the AFL Winery and Distillery Workers Union, which, in California was headed by Wallace Henderson of Fresno. Wally had succeeded in organizing practically all the wineries in the state, but nothing else at the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation Farm was organized. We got the help of the local union of Teamsters. We gave them all the truck drivers on the farm; a couple of hundred members were turned over to them and the unions jointly attempted to bargain with the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation to get recognition.

After the workers were signed up and Di Giorgio would not meet with them or see their committee, Joe Di Giorgio said there was nothing to bargain about. He said that it was another Communist move to disrupt the farms of Cali-

fornia, and he also made many other similar charges.

In mining and manufacturing it takes about \$8,000 to employ one man. The average in agriculture is \$14,000 per man, and on some big farms it runs as high as \$50,000.

**Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation**, a Delaware corporation, Kern County, California

**Produces**—Deciduous and citrus fruits, grapes and vegetables, cotton and grain.

**Controlled by**—A family corporation, with some directors from New York and Cuba.

**Owns**—31,000 acres richly irrigated land in California; large packing house and a 10,000,000 gallon winery, both located on the California farm and 4,000 acres in Florida. Also has a number of subsidiaries.

**Employs**—2,000 regular employees. Hires additional employees in harvest season from pool of several thousand workers living nearby in shack towns and migratory workers' camps.

The Union made every effort to negotiate with Di Giorgio but he refused to see anybody, even the Central Labor Union officers. They went out to see him but he refused to talk to them too.

So the Union members went on strike in the latter part of September, 1947.

The Union brought out 1,100 of the 1,345 employees on the big farm. Di Giorgio hired Mexican contract workers who quit along with the others, but the company told them to go back to work or they would be sent back to Mexico. So the Mexicans became strike breakers.

There is a widening gap in both wages and real earnings between hired farm workers and wage and salaried employees in nonagricultural occupations. While the average hourly earnings of factory workers were increasing by two-thirds, and the purchasing power of their pay envelopes rising by a fourth, between 1947 and 1957, the real annual earnings of farm workers showed no significant gain. Certainly as the trend continues toward a smaller agricultural work force, toward mechanization and larger operator units, the farm worker should receive his equitable share of the increased productivity, not only in terms of wages but in terms of improved lives and greater opportunities for educational development and opportunity for self-improvement.

JAMES P. MITCHELL  
Secretary of Labor

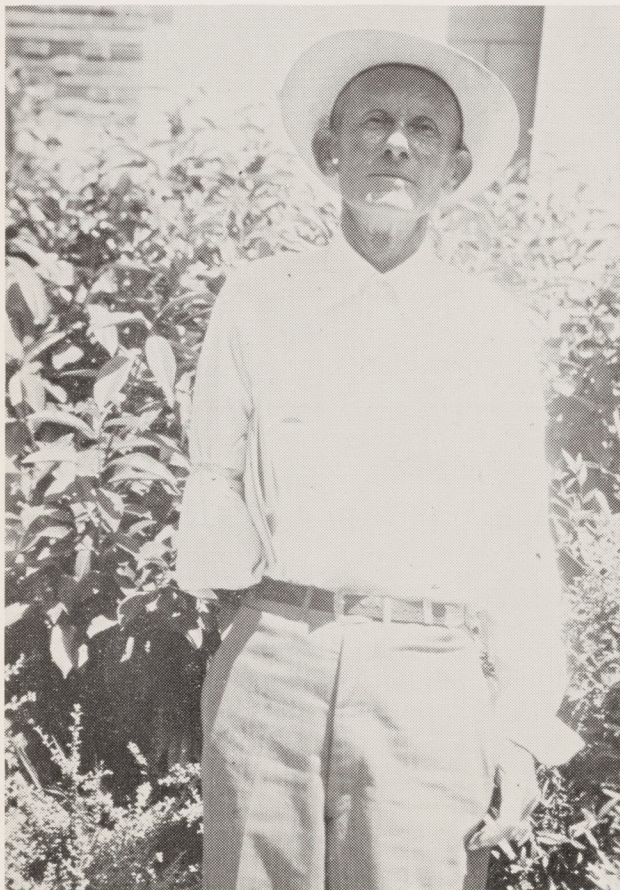




## On the Picket Line



On the picket line Ernesto Galarza and a group of the Di Giorgio strikers on the longest single picket line ever maintained by any union. The line was over 20 miles long. The strike lasted from October, 1947, through December, 1948.



Bob Whatley, Di Giorgio Organizer

R. E. "Bob" Whatley, Secretary of the Kern County Farm Labor Union 218, (1947-1959) called in the union organizer, Hank Hasiwar, to help unionize 1,100 employees of the largest corporation farm in California.



James Price, Strike Leader

James Price, president and leader of the Di Giorgio strikers' local union, was the victim of an attempted assassination when unknown men fired into a meeting of the Di Giorgio strike committee in the summer of 1948. Price was injured for life. Significantly, the Di Giorgio company doctor, the only one nearby, refused to render first aid when called. Price almost bled to death while being transported the 18 miles to a Bakersfield hospital.

### THE CARAVAN

One of the delegates, from a local of the Operating Engineers I believe, had visited the Di Giorgio strikers and saw the picket lines and people involved. The "Freedom Train" was being discussed and the Central Labor Union of Los Angeles was considering making a contribution. The Operating Engineers' delegate, a rank and file union member attending the Central Labor Union meeting, got up and said, "What are we talking about—sending a Freedom Train to Europe? We should be sending a Freedom Train up there to help the Di Giorgio strikers, just a hundred miles away from here. Instead of spending thousands of dollars on a Freedom Train to Europe, give money and send food and clothing up to the Di Giorgio strikers. Let organized labor take care of its own people first."

This delegate's remarks ended the proposal for the Los Angeles Central Labor Union to take part in the Freedom Train project. They organized a caravan—all the union people in Los Angeles contributed. They raised money from their members, and contributed money from their local union treasuries. They bought food, contributed food, gave clothing and bought clothing. And then on a cold January day they sent a great, long caravan of automobiles to Kern County to help the Di Giorgio strikers.



Not to be outdone, the San Francisco Central Labor Council—there's a rivalry between Los Angeles and San Francisco—extending even into the labor movement—did the same thing a little later on. The trade union movement in California, mobilized by the State Federation of Labor, contributed something like \$200,000 to this strike. We kept a picket line which we said was the longest picket line in the world. It extended around the 12,000 acre ranch for nearly two years.

Before this strike ended, the Screen Actors Guild in Hollywood and the other motion picture unions made a movie of the Di Giorgio strike. It was about 30 minutes long and showed pictures of the workers on the picket line, and the home of the boss, Joe Di Giorgio. A former C.B.S. commentator, Harry Flannery, gave the commentary. We used the film all over the country, at union meetings and conventions, to raise money for the strikers. There were a number of copies of the film. Some of the copies were sold or rented out to unions which showed the movie at meetings and would then take up a collection for the strikers.

In 1949, Di Giorgio sued the Hollywood Film Council, the State Federation of Labor, our national union and every individual they could find who had anything to do with the making of this film. They demanded about two million dollars for libel. There was just one thing that was wrong with the movie. A statement was made that the Di Giorgio workers were not covered by workmen's compensation. They

showed a picture of a worker with only one hand. He was cutting grapes. Since 99% of this film was correct, our lawyer, Al Schullman, said we could win a lawsuit.

The strike was called off after we could not get the financial help to fight this lawsuit. The case was finally settled out of court for a \$1 consideration, and an agreement to withdraw the film from circulation.



Photo: U.S.D.A.

Giant machines like the potato harvester are typical of farming today.

I take this occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary celebration of the founding of the National Agricultural Workers Union AFL-CIO of extending to it and its founders my very sincere congratulations for the work already done.

There are many who join with me in the hope that it will grow in strength and serve the Nation's farm workers with the same devotion to its interests it has shown in the past.

EMANUEL CELLER  
Member of Congress, New York

## REVOLUTION IN AGRICULTURE

By 1950 the agricultural revolution which began with the New Deal Triple A had about run its course. When the dust from the depression, the war and the post-war had settled down, it was possible to see the shape of the farm economy on the land.

In the South, the cotton economy which had first been rooted in slavery, and then after the Civil War had reseeded itself in tenancy, began to merge as a field industry based on wage labor.

The corporations had moved out beyond the city limits to operate giant factories in the field, utilizing huge investments and hired workers to produce an increasingly important share of the annual harvest of food and fiber.

The family farm economy, for more than three hundred years the dominant feature of the rural landscape, was in jeopardy.

At the very bottom of the society, almost unheard, almost invisible, in communities where there had still been no harvest of the guarantees, protections, or assurances which had been the fruit of the New Deal and Fair Deal over a period of twenty years, there were a million American families. For the most part the men and women in these families lived on less than \$1,000 a year. They lived without benefit of minimum wages or maximum hours, in a land where children still worked in the fields when they should be in school. In a time when every special interest group

had representation before the government and legislature, except for our Union, they were without organization and without a legal guarantee of their right to organize.

To focus attention on these people whom America had forgotten, and to get help for them, the National Agricultural Workers Union, with the support of A.F. of L. President William Green, and C.I.O. President Philip Murray, successfully proposed to President Truman that he appoint a Commission on Migratory Labor in Agriculture.

The Commission made a thorough and honest investigation which accurately described the misery, dirt, the sickness, the illiteracy, and the naked injustice in which hired farm wage earners lived.

But before the report could get hold of the American conscience, the national attention was engaged by the drama of the 1952 election.

Practically the only consequence of the study was to help end the wholesale defiance of the law by the massive employment of Mexican wetbacks. Acting on the disclosures made by the Commission, Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois succeeded in getting a measure through the Senate which would have penalized the employers of wetbacks. While the proposal was killed in the House of Representatives, it did serve to awaken the administration to its responsibility for enforcing the immigration laws. To mitigate the hardship on the farm factory corporation, however, the Government made a legal opening to provide them with Mexican workers under contracts which only slightly limited the abuses of the former illegal trade in human beings.



### WETBACKS

We made our final effort to stem the tide of migration of wetbacks into California in 1951 and 1952. The Union sent its whole force of organizers to the Imperial Valley. At that time there were about 6,000 resident farm workers, most of them of Mexican descent, in that area. There were also about 5,000 Mexican contract workers in there; perhaps 10,000 wetbacks from Mexico were employed also. Our organizers got the cooperation of the Mexican unions across the border. The Mexican contract Nationals, or braceros, are imported legally under an agreement between

our government and Mexico's. This agreement provided that in the event there was a strike or labor dispute, the Mexican workers would be removed from the strike-bound area.

The Union successfully organized 6,000 workers, practically all of the domestic workers. There were many businessmen in the towns of the Imperial Valley who were really feeling the loss of income received from native farm workers' wages. They realized that Mexican workers, whether they were here legally or illegally, spent very little money and that the American citizens were their best customers.



Wetback Round Up

After the end of World War II Mexican workers entered the United States (illegally) by the million each year until 1954. They worked on large corporation farms for little or no wages. The practice was for employers to send agents to Mexico, recruit the men, and aid them in crossing the border; make them work until crops were harvested, and then call the border patrol and have them deported from the U.S.A. without payment of wages. The Union led the fight for enforcement of immigration laws, and won that battle too.



In 1953, which was the high point of the illegal immigration, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service reported that over a million wetbacks were apprehended and deported.

Then members of our Union and the Mexican unions picketed the border in the Imperial Valley. The Mexican unions were on one side and our members on the other. This picketing of the border crossing points stopped the wetbacks from coming into California.

The Associated Farmers were mainly responsible for the employment of wetback labor in California. They hired labor agents in Mexico and others on this side of the border who, for so much per head, would bring Mexicans across to employers.

In 1950 *Colliers Magazine* sent Lester Velie out and he wrote a series of articles on the situation in California. As a result of these *Colliers* articles, I got the idea of getting a presidential commission on migratory labor appointed.

I wrote to President Truman asking for a Presidential Commission to study the migratory labor problem and I got others to write and telephone, and talk to people about it.

The committee was appointed and made investigations and issued a report called **Migratory Labor in American Agriculture**.

Since 1954, we have had a joint U.S.-Mexican Trade Union Committee, composed of representatives of all of the labor organizations in Mexico—about 95% they claim, and the AFL-CIO, the United Mine Workers and Railway Brotherhoods in this country. It has been quite a help to us, chiefly for its publicity value on this side. The Mexican unions have not as yet done much on their side. We have agreed though, that the problem would be partially solved if some of the Mexican farm workers were organized. The Mexican unions are now talking about organizing Mexican braceros before they come across, and advising them to contact us on this side.

The struggle to improve the lot of agricultural workers is one of the most worthy efforts in the Nation, and one of the most difficult and frustrating. You who work at it persistently are entitled to everyone's gratitude.

JAMES E. MURRAY  
U.S. Senator, Montana



Small farmers in Louisiana turned to traditional union methods and picketed strawberry processing plants and associations of handlers for union recognition. On the front line is Hank Hasiwar (1948-1954 Director of Organization for the Union), organizer of the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation and leader of the wetback strike in the Imperial Valley in California, and the sugar cane plantation workers strike of 1953.

In 1951, the southern staff of the A.F. of L. organized about 1,500 strawberry farmers in Louisiana. They were turned over to our National Union. We proceeded to organize most of the strawberry farmers in the area. At one time we had about 3,600 members in that section.

Then in 1953, as soon as the Eisenhower Administration came into office, the Federal Grand Jury subpoenaed the officers and an indictment was returned against the Union, its officials, and our Vice President, Hank Hasiwar, for violating the anti-trust law. After finding out that the Department

of Justice had a copy of a contract which would have proved a conspiracy between our Union local and these processors existed, our lawyer advised that the Union enter a plea of nolo contendere, and accept whatever the court handed out. The case was not decided until 1954. The local union itself was fined \$4,000 and each of these individuals was fined from \$500 to \$1,000, and given suspended prison sentences from 3 months to a year.

That broke up this very good local union of strawberry farmers which was the largest local we ever had. It averaged about 2,000 members for two years.





Photo by: Ernesto Galarza

Joe Guidry, Louisiana organizer for the Union, leads sugar cane plantation worker picket line in 1953. Joe Guidry, "a Cajun," as the French speaking people in Louisiana call themselves. Guidry is now a teacher in the Evangeline country of southwestern Louisiana. He was one of the hundreds of men and women who gave leadership in time of crisis to the struggle of the nation's farm workers to organize.

#### SUGAR CANE PLANTATION WORKERS

In the fall of 1953, 2,000 sugar cane workers in Louisiana went on strike, after exhausting all other means to better their miserable living and working conditions. Average family earnings were \$700 to \$1,200 per year. Within a month the strike was broken through a series of anti-labor injunctions, a type of court interference that has long been a thing of the past in industry. A year after the injunctions were appealed, the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that the injunctions were valid because the strike took place

during the harvest season and jeopardized a vital segment of the state's economy.

We started the organization of the sugar cane plantation workers in Louisiana. A group of Catholic priests was more or less responsible for our getting into the organization of plantation workers. Some of the sugar mill workers were organized in this area, and these rural priests offered much cooperation. They made their parish halls and school rooms available for union meetings. The priests also told the workers that they should join the Union. The result was that the Union succeeded in organizing about 2,000 workers, and tried to bargain with the sugar corporations, asking only for recognition.

Godchaux Sugars, Inc., a New York corporation operating in Louisiana.

**Produces**—Sugar.

**Controlled by**—Long a family corporation but then controlled by a group of rice mill operators in Texas and Louisiana with outside financial backing.

**Owns**—31,000 acres in six large plantations. 2 sugar cane grinding mills, a large sugar refinery, private railway system to haul cut cane to mills.

**Employs**—400 regular farm workers, 1,200 refinery and mill workers. During harvesting and grinding season, numbers of employees is increased substantially.

Anti-union injunctions were the worst ever. They prohibited meetings of the Union; prohibited distributions of relief—actually prohibited our attorney from advising us on how to fight the injunctions. Local Louisiana courts issued several of these injunctions. We were forced to call the strike off, because it meant that everybody would have gone to jail for violation of these injunctions. Again, we appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. It was not until the fall of 1955 that the Supreme Court acted on the case, and by that time, of course it was too late. The court did order the injunction dissolved.

I wish to extend warmest greetings and hearty congratulations to members of the National Agricultural Workers Union AFL-CIO on their 25th Anniversary. Your task has not been easy. Continued courage and endurance will be needed in the years ahead as you work to bring the benefits of your union to many more of your two million fellow agricultural workers. I wish you success and good fortune.

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
U.S. Senator, Minnesota

My congratulations and best wishes to the National Agricultural Workers Union AFL-CIO on the 25th Anniversary of its founding. The NAWU has been one of the most important forces for progress in agricultural labor.

I look forward to working with the Union on behalf of the programs which must be established if farm labor is to participate in the economic growth of the nation.

PAT McNAMARA  
U.S. Senator, Michigan



## 100 YEARS AGO WE OWNED SLAVES—

### NOW WE JUST LEASE THEM

Over 25 per cent of the average number of workers employed in American agriculture are now legally imported from Mexico and the British West Indies, with small groups also being imported from Japan and the Philippines. The Mexican Nationals are imported under international agreement between the two countries, and while there are guarantees written into the individual workers contracts, which, on paper theoretically permit the Mexican workers to select representatives for enforcing their contracts, in reality they are systematically denied the right to form any type of free association while employed in the United States on farms.



### FOREIGN CONTRACT LABOR

The temporary importation of thousands of foreign nationals under contract into the United States each year is an extraordinary feature of American agriculture.

The contracting system was introduced during the war, supposedly as an emergency measure.

The first international agreement with Mexico for the legal importation of these workers was signed in 1942. Throughout the war, the number of Mexican Nationals in this country under contract never exceeded 100,000.

The contracting system was almost the only wartime emergency measure which was not terminated at the end of the war.

A few years ago, large groups of migratory workers specialized in harvesting crops on a piece rate basis, moving from field to field, area to area, and state to state as the crops matured. Several thousand workers formerly earned good wages picking melons and cutting lettuce on a piece rate basis. These workers have now been displaced by Mexican contract workers employed at low hourly wage rates.

The number of contract workers employed during the war more than tripled in the post-war years, so that in 1957—450,000 contract workers were employed in agriculture.

The contracting program is operated by the U.S. Department of Labor, along with a Special Farm Labor Advisory

For such a worker to individually or collectively protest a contract violation to an employer, in practically all cases, this insures his transfer to another job or immediate repatriation to Mexico. . . .

A high official of the U.S. Department of Labor has publicly described the 450,000 foreign workers imported into the United States for farm work each year as a "captive labor force." A member of Congress is quoted as saying—"100 years ago we owned slaves, now we just lease them."

The British West Indian, the Japanese and Filipino workers are imported directly by farm employers without guarantees by the U.S. Government of the terms of their contract. These workers are subject to disciplinary measures which are tantamount to penal sanctions.

Committee consisting of one employer representative from each state. There is also a labor advisory committee whose influence is nil.



### Mexicans Entering the U.S.A.

They are signing in for periods of 6 weeks to 6 months (the contract is renewable). They become a part of a "controlled labor force a half-million strong."



### LABOR UNITY

When the AFL and CIO merged in 1955 and the announcement was made that the new unified labor movement would finish the job of organizing the wage earners of America, the men and women on the farms thought hopefully that at last their turn had come, as it had come twenty years earlier for wage earners in steel, in rubber, in auto, and in the other factory industries.

But the dawn of the great day did not break immediately. Then in 1959, under the leadership of Dr. Frank P. Graham, the National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor was organized, and as a consequence of a dramatic public hearing in Washington, conducted by the Committee, the long neglect of the bottom two million was forcefully called to the attention of government, labor and the public. The Com-

mittee pledged to assist in securing the enforcement of those few but never enforced laws which apply to hired farm workers.

The Committee proposed to help get new laws to extend the minimum wage law to farm workers and legal protection of the right to organize, and to provide them with the privileges and benefits which other workers enjoy.

An attempt is being made to tell the people of America about the situation of agricultural workers, to win public support in the effort to obtain for farm workers the American heritage which they have been so long denied.

The AFL-CIO is also pledged to give hired farm workers the help they need to help themselves in building their union.

I cannot recall a union which has been forced to fight against greater handicaps. Yet you have carried on manfully and courageously without losing faith in the justice of your cause despite the most vicious and relentless opposition. I assure you of the full and tangible support of the AFL-CIO in the organizational job that must be done and will be done.

GEORGE MEANY  
President, AFL-CIO



Registration of Delegates to a Union Convention

An inter-racial union from its beginning, the National Agricultural Workers Union includes in its membership Spanish speaking Americans of Mexican descent, American Negroes, and others of every national origin are represented in the melting pot that is America.



## AND NOW THE FUTURE

It has been twenty-five years since the 18 prayerful sharecroppers met on the Fairview Plantation to organize the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, and still the misery has receded only slightly—the hope is still unfulfilled.

In the quarter of a century, thousands of men and women have been beaten, jailed, blacklisted, driven from their homes and in some cases, even murdered.

In the interval, outer space has been penetrated; a new weapon capable of destroying the earth has been devised; a fumbling world order has been established; the American economy has been transformed; the nature of work on the farm has been changed unrecognizably. But one thing remains that animated the 18 founding members who looked at Fairview Plantation with one eye on the White House

in Washington—and with the other on the desperate personal misery of the workers on the land. This—the hope that gave them the strength to make one more try for justice—this is the heritage they left us.

### No More Mourning

No more mourning, no more mourning  
After a while  
Before I'd be a slave  
I'd be buried in my grave  
And take my place with those  
Who lived and fought before.



The Union Executive Board, 1942

Seated—reading left to right—H. L. Mitchell, Secretary; Roy Raley of Alabama, President, STFU (1942-1944); F. R. Betton, Vice President; and J. E. Clayton of Texas, an orator who was equal to any America ever produced.

Standing—reading left to right—Roy Parks of Missouri, Wilburn White of Mississippi; W. M. Tanner, Holiness minister and effective union organizer; John F. Hynds, one of the heroic men who built the STFU. He was literally fearless. A small man in size, he once told a plantation mobster who caught him on the street of Forrest City, "Go ahead and shoot, I'll cut your throat as I fall." The big planter dropped his gun and ran. Hayes McCrary of Reform, Ala.; E. O. Sistrunk of Meridian, Miss.; and Anderson Johnson of McCrory, Arkansas. All were outstanding men.

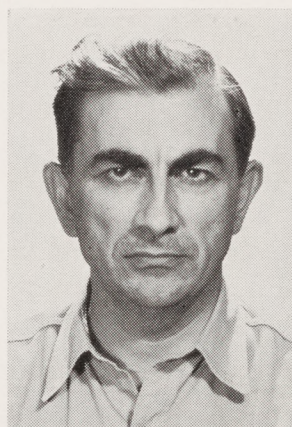


## Union Officers — 1959



Arkansas Farm Labor Leader

George Stith, Executive Board Member (1959) joined the Southern Tenant Farmers Union at the age of 18, and for 23 years has served first as local secretary, county secretary, member of the Executive Board, and Vice President of the National Union. An able organizer, George Stith has worked in many states, taking part in all organizing campaigns, negotiated with employers, handled recruitment and transportation of Union members on seasonal jobs under its organized migration program.



Ernesto Galarza

Secretary-Treasurer (1959)  
National Agricultural Workers Union

Born in Mexico, Galarza is a naturalized American citizen. He came to the United States at the age of 4 with his family who were migratory farm workers following the crops from Texas to California. Educated in public schools of California, Occidental College, Los Angeles, Leland Stanford University, and received his Ph.D. at Columbia. Employed by the Pan-American Union, he resigned in 1947 to return to California as Research and Education Director for the Union. Educator, lecturer and author, his latest work is "Strangers In Our Fields," a study of the Mexican National employed in the United States.



FARISH R. BETTON

Tenant farmer, country school teacher and one time Justice of Peace, F. R. Betton was elected Vice President of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in 1938 and has served continuously in this capacity ever since. Father of 13 children, each of whom received a college education and became fine, upstanding citizens.

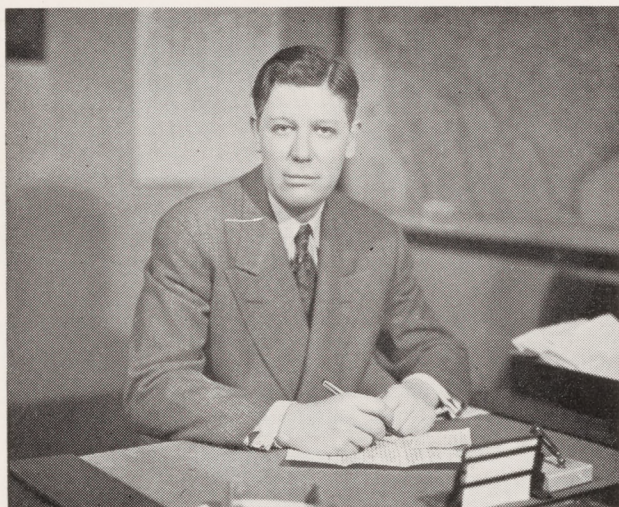


It is an honor and a privilege to be a member of your union for one day. We in Arkansas are proud of the fact that the National Agricultural Workers Union is the only international union in the AFL-CIO which started in Arkansas.

BILL WILLIAMS  
Secretary, Arkansas Labor Council

On this 25th anniversary of the founding of the National Agricultural Workers Union, I salute the courage and devotion of its founders, of its officers and members. I also salute the intrepid work of this organization.

JAMES ROOSEVELT  
Member of Congress, 26th Dist. California



H. L. MITCHELL

H. L. Mitchell, President of the National Agricultural Workers Union (1944-1959). One of the 18 men who founded the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in Arkansas a quarter-century ago. He was the first Secretary of the Union. A native of Tennessee, "Mitch" devoted his life to the service of workers in the fields.

I send this message of congratulations to the National Agricultural Workers Union for its past efforts, and urge that it continue these efforts. I commit myself to lend a hand in any way I may properly do so toward the achievement of the objectives for this neglected segment of our population.

RICHARD BOLLING  
Member of Congress, 5th Dist. Missouri

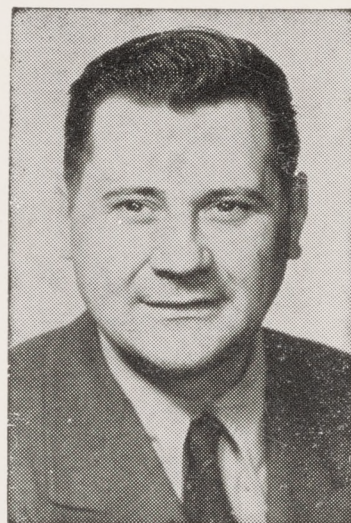
I am honored to extend warm good wishes to the nation's farm workers on the 25th Anniversary of the National Agricultural Workers Union. May I say simply that your accomplishments to date are heartening, that work still to be done is challenging and that, in this, I offer my full support.

JEFFERY COHELAN  
Member of Congress, 7th Dist. California





Dorothy Dowe, Secretary-Treasurer, National Agricultural Workers Union 1944-1951, now Mrs. H. L. Mitchell.



H. E. "Hank" Hasiwar, Organization Director, 1947-54. A top flight farm labor organizer Hasiwar is now a successful business man in New York City.

Many factors contribute to the tragic conditions under which migratory workers still live and work. There has been neglect by state legislature and by Congress, a general absence of public concern and indignation, and a concentration by labor on the problems of industrial workers. It is not enough to blame others for these failures. But no citizen and no public-minded group can be excused from the responsibility to do something to improve working and living conditions of migratory farm workers. Such effort is a response to conscience, to the moral obligation to help a distressed group of fellow citizens attain the basic minimum of civil, social and economic rights.

EUGENE J. McCARTHY  
U.S. Senator, Minnesota

We in the AFL-CIO, frankly, have not yet learned how to organize agricultural workers. The AFL-CIO has an organizing campaign under way in the 11 counties east and north of San Francisco, with Stockton as our headquarters. A director and a staff of 10 to 20 organizers are at work. We are searching for a formula and when it is found, we will apply it broadly.

FRANZ E. DANIEL  
Assistant Director of Organization

I hope you will assure your membership that I shall continue to devote my best efforts to advancing the well-being and prosperity of farmers and farm communities and all people in agriculture.

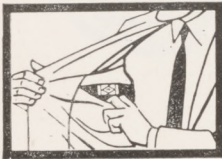
THOMAS LUDLOW ASHLEY  
Member of Congress, 9th Dist. Ohio



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR 25th ANNIVERSARY

**GOT A UNION LABEL**

**IN YOUR SUIT AND SHIRT?**



in the inside pocket  
of your suit jacket

**CHECK NOW !**



on the tail  
of your shirt

**AMALGAMATED**

**CLOTHING WORKERS OF AMERICA**

**15 Union Square, New York 3, N. Y.**

To millions of American farm laborers, the word "prosperity" will remain a hollow, taunting mockery so long as more than 2 million of them must work at substandard wages in deplorable living conditions. How can these millions, seeking to support their families on less than \$900 a year, be appreciative of "the American way of life?" Excluded from coverage by minimum wage and unemployment insurance, as well as virtually all other social legislation, they can look only to union action for improvement of their lot. Yet, here, too, they must first overcome immense obstacles—not the least of which is the fact that farm labor is left out of all federal protection of the right to organize.

The truly heroic efforts of America's Farm Workers' Union deserve the wholehearted, continuous support of this country's entire labor movement.

**INTERNATIONAL LADIES' GARMENT WORKERS' UNION**

LOUIS STULBERG  
General Secretary-Treasurer  
ILGWU



*Greetings and Best Wishes*

To The

**National Agricultural Workers Union**

*On its 25th Anniversary*

From The

**International Brotherhood of Operative Potters**

E. L. WHEATLEY  
President

CHAS. F. JORDAN  
Secretary-Treasurer

**IN UNION THERE IS STRENGTH!**

The 200,000 men and women who are the United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America pledge continued all-out support to the National Agricultural Workers Union, AFL-CIO, in its struggle for a better standard of living.

**United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum &  
Plastic Workers of America—AFL-CIO**

**URW Bldg., 87 S. High St., Akron, Ohio**

L. S. BUCKMASTER  
President

JOSEPH CHILDS  
Vice President

DESMOND WALKER  
Secretary-Treasurer





*Congratulations and Greetings*  
to America's  
**Farm Workers Union**  
on its 25th anniversary  
from the

## **Textile Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO**

WILLIAM POLLOCK, General President

JOHN CHUPKA, General Secretary-Treasurer

EMIL RIEVE, Executive Council Chairman

Best Wishes to the Farm Workers

### **International Chemical Workers Union**

Local No. 85

AFL-CIO

**Boron, California**

25th Anniversary Greetings

To the

### **National Agricultural Workers Union AFL-CIO**

From An Old Friend—The 77-Year-Old

### **Upholsterers International Union of North America**

**1882—Philadelphia**

Sal. B. Hoffmann, President  
Alfred Rote, First Vice President



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**The Brotherhood of  
Maintenance of Way Employees**

**Extends**

*Best Wishes*

**for**

*Your Continued Progress*

H. C. CROTTY  
President

FRANK L. NOAKES  
Secretary-Treasurer

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Congratulations, Greetings and Felicitations

To the

**National Agricultural Workers Union,  
AFL-CIO**

Upon Its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

**Brotherhood  
of  
Sleeping Car Porters**

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH  
International President

ASHLEY L. TOTTEN  
Secretary-Treasurer

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*Greetings*

**International Union of United Brewery, Flour,  
Cereal, Soft Drink and Distillery Workers  
of America AFL-CIO-CLC**

KARL F. FELLER  
International President

THOMAS RUSCH  
Director of Organization

ARTHUR P. GILDEA  
Secretary-Treasurer

JOSEPH E. BRADY  
Director of Legislation

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*Greetings*

**CLOAK OUT OF TOWN DEPT.**

**I. L. G. W. V.**

**1710 Broadway**

**New York City**

GEORGE RUBIN  
General Manager

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May you soon  
achieve your goal  
of organizing all  
farm workers!

**GLASS BOTTLE  
BLOWERS ASSOCIATION**

**AFL-CIO**

226 South 16th St., Philadelphia, Pa.

**Lee W. Minton, Int'l President**

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*Greetings and Best Wishes*

From the hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers members of free trade unions in Europe, Asia and Africa affiliated with the International Landworkers Federation.

All honor to the pioneers who a quarter century ago founded your movement and to all who followed and kept up the fight. The organized agricultural workers of the free world support you in your fight for social justice.

ADRI DE RUIJTER, General Secretary  
International Landworkers Federation  
Utrecht, Netherlands

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Congratulations on your 25th Anniversary. Here's hoping this marks the beginning of the realization of the general labor movement for needs of agricultural workers.

**AMAL. FOOD & ALLIED WORKERS  
LOCAL 56**

**LEON B. SCHACHTER, President**

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*Best Wishes*

From

**International Brotherhood  
Of Pulp, Sulphite  
And Paper Mill Workers**

**International Office—Fort Edward,  
New York**

JOHN P. BURKE  
President-Secretary

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*Greetings and Best Wishes*

**Washington State Labor  
Council, AFL-CIO**

E. M. WESTON  
President

MARVIN L. WILLIAMS  
Secretary-Treasurer

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We of the

**RETAIL CLERKS UNION, LOCAL 1179  
Richmond, California**

wish you strength in the battle for your proper place in the American way of life. The American Farm Worker has too long been considered a second-class citizen. We, as a California local, feel honored to be in the chosen state where the AFL-CIO is now conducting their organizational drive.



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Best Wishes  
from

**International Alliance of  
Theatrical Stage Employes  
and Moving Picture Machine  
Operators, AFL-CIO.**



RICHARD F. WALSH  
International President

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*Greetings and Best Wishes*

**LOCAL 365 U. A. W.—AFL-CIO**

**179 Jamaica Ave.**

**Brooklyn 7, N. Y.**

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Congratulations to America's Farm Workers Union  
On Your 25th Anniversary

**AMALGAMATED CLOTHING WORKERS  
OF AMERICA**

**15 Union Square, New York 3, N. Y.**

(Washable Clothing, Sportswear & Novelty Workers  
Union Local 169)

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Greetings

**DRESSMAKERS UNION LOCAL 22,  
ILGWU**

PEARL HALPERN  
Chairlady

ISRAEL BRESLOW  
Secretary Manager

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Greetings and Best Wishes

**To All Members National Agricultural Workers  
Union—AFL-CIO**

**DAIRY FARMERS LOCAL 293**

**South Range, Wis.**

ROBERT FARICY, Secretary

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GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES

**To All Members of the Union on the 25th Anniversary  
of its founding**

**KARL SCHIMENEK, Wentworth, Wis.**

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*Greetings and Best Wishes*

For

Continued Success and Progress

**Pennsylvania CIO Council**

Dauphin Building

Harrisburg, Pa.

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We wish to thank all of organized labor and its  
friends for the moral and financial support we  
received during the recent steel strike.

**UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA**

**FDR-AFL-CIO Local Union 2102**

**Pueblo, Colorado**

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Greetings and Good Wishes to all Officers and  
Members of the

**National Agricultural Workers Union**

on its 25th Anniversary

A. A. TIGGS  
FELIX REED

HARLAN B. WINSTON  
JAMES ROBERT TIGGS

Russellville, Alabama

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**IN MEMORY OF JOHN FRANCIS HYND**

**Arkansas**

**Organizer and Executive Council Member  
Southern Tenant Farmers Union  
1936-1945**

Mrs. Albert H. Richburg  
Sheffield, Alabama

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FRATERNAL GREETINGS

From the

**MICHIGAN STATE AFL-CIO OFFICERS**

**and**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

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FRATERNAL GREETINGS

**DISTRICT NO. 3 FUR & LEATHER DEPARTMENT**

**Amalgamated Meat Cutters & Butcher Workmen  
of North America, AFL-CIO**

BERNARD J. WOOLIS, Director  
JOSEPH JENKS, Secretary-Treasurer

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FRATERNAL GREETINGS

**Bonnaz, Embroideries, Tucking, Pleating and Allied  
Crafts Union, Local 66, I.L.G.W.U.  
225 W. 39th St., New York 18, N. Y.  
MURRAY GROSS, Manager Secretary**

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Greetings

**CLEVELAND AFL-CIO FEDERATION OF LABOR**

PATRICK J. O'MALLEY, President  
WILLIAM FINEGAN, Executive Secretary

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Greetings

**KNITGOODS WORKERS UNION  
(ILGWU)**

**2810 N. Broad St., Philadelphia 32, Pa.**

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Congratulations On Your 25th Anniversary  
Success On Your Organizing Drive

**DISTRICT 3 IUE—AFL-CIO**

JACK R. SUAREZ, President  
PETER R. SCIBETTA, Secretary-Treasurer

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Greetings and Best Wishes from

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF HOSIERY WORKERS  
2319 N. Broad St., Philadelphia 32, Pa.**

ANDREW JANASKIE, President  
M. Banachowicz, Secretary-Treasurer

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Greetings and Best Wishes On Your 25th Anniversary  
**Aeronautical Machinists Lodge 1125 Council  
Executive Board and its affiliated Locals**

2191	2195
2192	2196
2193	2215
2194	2216

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**United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of  
America, Carpenters' Local Union No. 844  
Reseda, California**

Wishes You Continued Success and Growth

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If there is any labor organization in America  
that is more deserving of support, I don't  
know what it is.

LISTON M. OAK

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GREETINGS FROM

**KNITGOODS WORKERS' UNION LOCAL 155  
ILGWU**

SAM SINENSKY, President  
LOUIS NELSON, Manager-Secretary

---

Greetings and Best Wishes  
To the Farm Workers

**Hod Carriers Building and Common Laborers,  
Local 1130**

**604 10th St., Modesto, Calif.**

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GREETINGS

**CARPENTERS UNION LOCAL No. 1507  
El Monte, Calif.**

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Congratulations and Best Wishes

**San Luis Obispo County Central Labor Council  
531 Marsh St., San Luis Obispo, Calif.**

Pres.—Margaret McQuillan	V. Pres.—Sanford Simons
Sgt.-at-Arms—Marty Vurpillat	Sec'y-Treas.—R. A. Walters

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The Officers and Members of

**CARPENTERS LOCAL UNION No. 1622  
Hayward, Calif.**

Send Greetings and Best Wishes on the 25th  
Anniversary of Your Great Organization

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Congratulations and Best Wishes

**PAINTERS LOCAL 507  
San Jose, Calif.**

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**Congratulations on Your Silver Anniversary!**

Your contribution to Organized Labor is beyond acclaim, and the growth of your organization has been an inspiration to the entire labor movement. Sincere good wishes for continued success.

**Los Angeles County District Council of Carpenters  
2200 W. Seventh St., Los Angeles, Calif.**

WILLIAM SIDELL, Secretary-Treasurer

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WARMEST FRATERNAL GREETINGS  
on your 25th Anniversary

You have remembered America's forgotten workers

**JEWISH LABOR COMMITTEE  
25 East 78 Street, New York City**

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Best Wishes to the National Agricultural Workers  
Union—AFL-CIO from members of the  
**Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers International Union**  
**AFL-CIO—Local 1-128 and its 7000 members in**  
**the Los Angeles Basin**

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CARPENTERS LOCAL 769  
42 E. Walnut St.  
Pasadena, Calif.

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UNITED RUBBER WORKERS'  
Local No. 289  
Windsor, Vermont

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Congratulations and Best Wishes  
A. F. L.-C. I. O. COUNCIL  
Alliance, Ohio

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We Extend Greetings and Best Wishes  
A. F. L.-C. I. O. COUNCIL  
Walla Walla, Wash.

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PAPER BOX MAKERS UNION, LOCAL 299  
New York City

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Best Wishes From The  
AREA COUNCIL—AFL-CIO  
Eau Claire, Wis.

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ARIZONA STATE, AFL-CIO  
520 West Adams Street  
Phoenix, Arizona

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Best Wishes From  
TUSCARAWAS COUNTY AFL-CIO COUNCIL  
New Philadelphia, Ohio

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TENNESSEE STATE LABOR COUNCIL  
939 Church St.  
Nashville, Tenn.

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CARPENTERS UNION LOCAL 642  
Richmond, California  
Chartered October 30, 1901

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Culinary Workers, Bartenders and Hotel Service  
Employees, Local No. 535  
San Bernardino, California

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Greetings And Best Wishes  
LOCAL No. 320 U. P. P.  
Stockton, California

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Anniversary Greetings From  
LOCAL 346  
Houma, La.

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From Friends Far Across The World  
MILO HIMES, LABOR ADVISOR  
All Pakistan Confederation of Labor

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Greetings  
Best Wishes  
M. S., Noviic

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### Greetings from League for Mutual Aid

We who co-operate with the "forgotten people"

Space contributed by a mutual friend

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Mr. and Mrs. George Bidermau

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Cordial Greetings From  
UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE  
Los Angeles, California

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IN UNION, THERE IS STRENGTH!  
Greetings From  
Chaim, Norma and Gregory Shatan, New York

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May Divine Intelligence, Wisdom, and Love  
Guide, Direct and Protect all your Activities  
GLENDALE BURBANK GRIFFITH GARDEN  
AND CIVIC CLUB

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### *Greetings and Best Wishes*

Appleton Federation of Labor Unions, Appleton, Wis.

Bagmaker Federal Labor Union No. 23606, St. Louis, Mo.

Bartenders' & Culinary Workers Local 368, Grass Valley,  
Calif.

Bay County Labor Council AFL-CIO, Bay City, Mich.

Bernard Pipe Supply, Los Angeles, Calif.

Befhel United Presbyterian Church (Rev. J. A. McDaniel,  
Minister), Memphis, Tenn.

Building & Construction Trades Council, Fresno, Calif.

Carpenters Local Union No. 1976, Los Angeles, Calif.

Central Labor Council, Fresno, Calif.

Department & Variety Store Clerks Local 170, Fresno, Calif.

Guernsey County Central Labor Union

Housing Employees Local 1577, Stockton, Calif.

International Bro. of Electrical Workers Local 47, South San  
Gabriel, Calif.

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 315,  
Buffalo, N. Y.

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 552, El  
Paso, Tex.

J. C. Pressmen & Assistants' Union No. 184, Ashland, Mo.

Ladies Auxiliary Chapter 154, United Rubber Workers,  
Denver, Colo.

Lathers Local No. 341, Modesto, Calif.

Miscellaneous Culinary Employees Local 110, San Francisco,  
Calif.

Negro Labor Committee, New York, N. Y.

Southern Missouri District Council ILGWU, Poplar Bluff, Mo.



GREETINGS AND GOOD WISHES

TO THE NATION'S FARM WORKERS

**On the 25th Anniversary  
of the Founding of Their Union**

From

**National Maritime Union of America**

Joseph Curran, President Steve Federoff, Sec'y-Treas.

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*Greetings and Best Wishes*

St. Cloud AFL-CIO Trades & Labor Assembly, St. Cloud,  
Minn.

Textile Workers Union of America Local 683, Garnerville,  
N. Y.

Textile Workers Union of America Local 898, Newburgh,  
N. Y.

United Furniture Workers of America Local 37, Leroy, N. Y.

United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum & Plastic Workers Local 231,  
New Haven, Conn.

David Aronson, Upper Montclair, N. J.

Dr. and Mrs. Moses Barron, Minneapolis, Minn.

F. R. Betton, St. Louis, Mo.

Mrs. Godfrey Brinley, Tucson, Ariz.

Clarence N. Callender, San Diego, Calif.

Mrs. Louise Edgar Colie, Mantoloking, N. J.

Mary A. Dingman, Berea, Ky.

Will Dorsey, Forrest City, Ark.

Roland Gibson, Chestertown, Md.

Noah Graham, Bragg City, Mo.

Lester B. Granger, New York, N. Y.

Joe Guidry, Jr., Lafayette, La.

Mr. and Mrs. Mack A. Heald, Swathmore, Pa.

Frank J. Heymann, Media, Pa.

Lucien Koch, Chicago, Ill.

Charles Lee, St. Paul, Minn.

Mrs. Alfred M. Lindau, New York, N. Y.

Rev. J. Pierce Newell, Madison, N. J.

Mack North, Widener, Ark.

Dora Pollock, Chicago, Ill.

Mrs. C. H. Pope, Winnetka, Ill.

Priscilla Robertson, Anchorage, Ky.

Rev. and Mrs. B. F. Richer, Toledo, O.

Eleanor M. Sickels, Flushing, N. Y.

Sarah Johnson Smith, Brooklyn, N. Y.

M. T. Van Hecke, Chapel Hill, N. C.

Elsa H. Van Soest, Los Angeles, Calif.

Rev. C. C. Watson, Widener, Ark.

Samuel S. White, Kansas City, Mo.

Wilbur J. Young, Wallingford, Pa.



There will come a time we know, when the agricultural workers of this nation will develop their union into the most powerful, and yet the most reasonable group of trade unionists in the nation. Our hearts will be with you, and you may depend upon us to give the same faithful service to your group as we have given in the past.

## **Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workman of North America**

**AFL-CIO**

**2800 North Sheridan Rd.**

**CHICAGO 14, ILLINOIS**

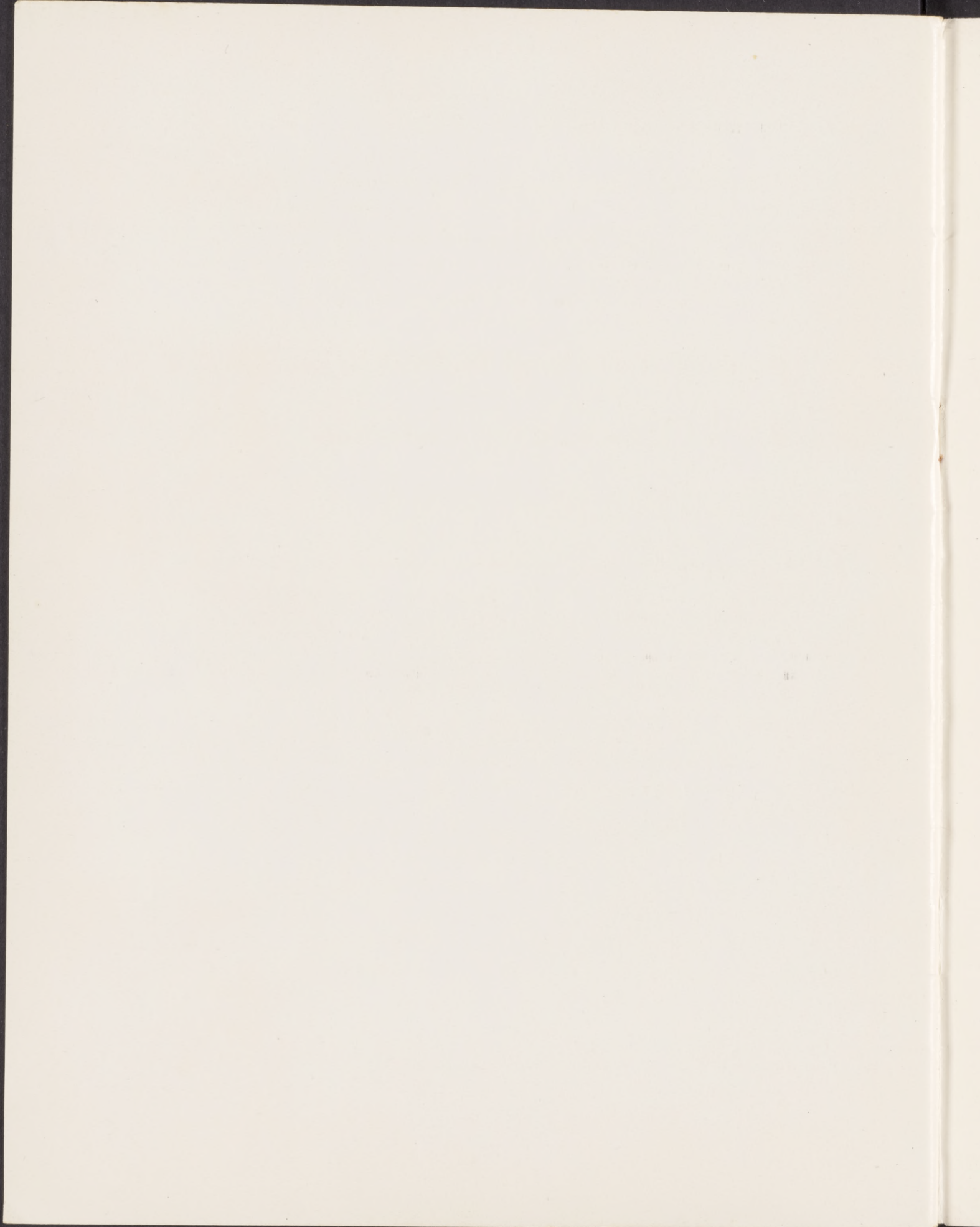
**THOMAS J. LLOYD**  
President

**PATRICK E. GORMAN**  
Secretary-Treasurer











# **The Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO**

**Extends Fraternal Greetings**

**to the**

## **National Agricultural Workers Union, AFL-CIO**

### **on its 25th Anniversary**

Your union is a conscience to the entire nation in its unending battle for social, economic, and political justice for those whose toil makes possible the tremendous agricultural bounty of this nation.

You may rest assured that your cause will never be forgotten and that your fight will never be in vain.

We join you in this 25th Anniversary Celebration in the knowledge that your fight will bring ultimate justice to the nation's exploited agricultural workers.

There is no room in today's America for the shameful conditions under which the farm worker must still toil. Until this fight is won, none of us can accept the gift of our daily bread with tranquility.

WALTER P. REUTHER  
President

JAMES B. CAREY  
Secretary-Treasurer

ALBERT WHITEHOUSE  
Director



## To Our Brothers in the Fields —

The million and more workers in our nation's automobile, aircraft and agricultural implement plants and offices take this occasion to pledge their full support to the cause of the National Agricultural Workers Union (AFL-CIO), a union truly built and held together by raw courage and devotion.

Organized industrial labor owes to you and your predecessor organization, The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, a great debt; for the spirit you displayed against such great odds was a main source of inspiration to the workers in mass production industries who found the strength and fortitude in the mid-30s to build their own great unions.



Your 25th anniversary sends memory spinning back to the dreadful mid-1930s when hundreds of thousands of migrant farm workers and their families slept on riverbanks and under bridges, in roaming the land in search of a few hours' work. More than any other section of American life, the millions of people the NAWU seeks to protect are paying the penalty for the same social, economic and political sins that brought on the depression and keep poverty alive in vast corners of America. Our labor movement must dedicate itself, as the NAWU has done, to extending justice across our sweeping farmlands whose beauty hides mass wretchedness and injustice, where millions of workers are denied the simplest rights of organizing, of a \$1 minimum wage, of workmen's compensation, of social security and unemployment compensation, of any health care—even of welfare.

# UAW

WALTER REUTHER  
President

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EMIL MAZEY  
Secretary-Treasurer  
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